National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

NL-339 (r. 88/04) c

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TOWARDS A PRESERVATION ETHIC:
Alberta Women's Ideas Concerning Nature
1880 - 1950

BY

SHARON LETISHA THURSTON

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS

IN

RECREATION

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND LEISURE STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1992

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-73279-2

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Sharon Letisha Thurston

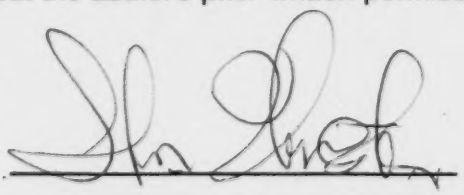
TITLE OF THESIS: Towards a Preservation Ethic: Alberta Women's Ideas Concerning Nature, 1880 - 1950

DEGREE: Master of Arts in Recreation

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: Spring 1992

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and accept as herein before provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.



1110-10149 Saskatchewan Drive
Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4R5

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, the thesis entitled TOWARDS A PRESERVATION ETHIC: ALBERTA WOMEN'S IDEAS CONCERNING NATURE, 1880-1950, submitted by SHARON LETISHA THURSTON in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTERS OF ARTS in RECREATION.

Dr. D. Shogan

Dr. D. Whitson

Dr. D. Owram

Date: December 16, 1991

To

Sarah and Jeremy

Abstract

Between 1880 and 1950, a dominant view of nature and conservation existed that understood nature to be a valuable and useful economic resource and conservation to be a tool for resource management. These concepts, developed by expansionist ideas and visions, while being economically and political expedient, were short-sighted and limited. This study examines, from a recreationist's perspective, a view of nature which is more regionally and rurally based. This alternative view understands nature in more personal terms and supports a more preservationist ideal of conservation which, in turn, has nurtured the contemporary environmental movement of today.

In deference to the principle that history is constantly being reviewed and reinterpreted, this paper seeks to challenge the conventional beliefs concerning conservation in Canada and suggests that "nature" is a socially constructed concept. In Canada, those who have written about this topic have chosen to study only the dominant, privileged view which has been directed primarily by men as part of their work through economic and political systems. It is contention of this study that while this emphasis is important, there is an equally significant and more enduring focus regarding conservation that can be traced through the social and cultural history of the country. This view of nature is best described in women's personal and published writing.

A review of literature concerning the development of organizations on the prairies shows that women's involvement often directly resulted in the

establishment of nature and outdoor recreation organizations. These were highly influential in spawning a more preservationist attitude to the land.

Our yearning for the simpler life and the back-to-the-land movement of contemporary Canadian society is a reinterpretation and renaming of the understanding women have long had concerning their relationship to the land and the efforts they put forth to insure that their ideas and views be nurtured and ever-present.

Table of Contents

		Page
List of Tables		i
Chapter		
1.	Introduction	1
2.	The Dominant View of the Relationship between Nature and Conservation, 1990 - 1940	12
	Dominion/Federal Development Policies	16
	Agricultural Development	20
	Lumbering and Mining	24
	Hunting and Fishing Sports Activities	26
	Human Resources	30
3.	An Alternative View of Nature	33
	Nature as Man's Domain	34
	Nature as an Unreliable Home	38
	Nature as Freedom and Adventure	40
	Nature as Beauty	44
	Nature as Spiritual Healer	49
	Women as Protector of Nature	52
4.	Women's Public Involvement with Nature and Their Contributions to a Preservation Consciousness	59
	Women's Involvement in Nature Study	64
	Women's Involvement in Camping	75
	Nature Issues and Women's Organizations	80
	Women's Involvement in Outdoor Recreation Programs	84
5.	Summary Observations	89
Works Cited		94

Tables

Table		Page
1.	Membership in the Alpine Club of Canada, 1907	66
2.	Women's Involvement in the Alberta Natural History Society Meetings	70
3.	Women's Involvement on the Executive of the Alberta Natural History Society	71
4.	Girl Guides in Alberta, 1930 to 1940	76

Chapter 1

Introduction

Nature has dominated the lives of prairie men and women from the beginning of the settlement of the West. The astonishing distance, breadth, complexity and diversity has shaped prairie history, culture and settlers' own self concept. Indeed, it has been instrumental in shaping the very concept of nature itself as well as its people's relationship to it. This environment has demanded that its inhabitants interpret it according to some set of philosophical or metaphysical values. Understood sometimes as wilderness, playground, opportunity, or resource, the value of the prairie has been ever changing as our sense of nature and our relationship to it has changed. While some values regarding nature have gained prominence at certain times in history, others have not been recognized and supported. They have remained under the surface, undetected, only to emerge at another time in the future. So it has been with conservation consciousness. This study documents the dominant view of nature and conservation and examines the alternative view of these concepts that existed in Alberta between 1880 and 1950.

Documentation by historians of the development of conservation in Canada has focussed primarily on government involvement and government initiative. It has emphasized the development of national parks,[1] government

---

[1] L. Bella, Parks for Profit (Harvest House Ltd., Montreal, 1987); and W. Lothian, A History of Canada's National Parks (Ottawa, 1976. V. 1,2); and R.C. Brown, "A Doctrine of Usefulness: Natural Resources and National Policy in Canada 1887-1914," Conference on the "Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow" (University of Calgary, Calgary,1968).

policy regarding protection of wildlife,[2] development of resources[3] and the establishment of the Commission on Conservation.[4]

Such emphasis has led to certain commonly shared, often not articulated, assumptions regarding the development and very nature of conservation. The first is that the dominant understanding of conservation, with its utilitarian emphasis focussing on the wise use of resources, has been shared historically by both men and women.[5] There is a conspicuous lack of documentation of the involvement of women in materials related to conservation. In conjunction with this is an assumption that interest in conservation is an urban phenomenon involving primarily intellectual elites and high-ranking government officials.[6] Consequently, both women and rural populations are not seen as significant contributors to the development of conservation in Canada. Finally, there is an assumption which presumes that conservation, as it is presently constituted with its emphasis on holistic paradigms, is a relatively recent phenomenon.[7]

These assumptions, while not totally erroneous, are limiting and do not allow for a fuller understanding regarding the development of conservation. They do not allow for an expanded examination of historical documentation or for the development of an alternative viewpoint necessary for a more complete

---

2 J. Foster, Working For Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation In Canada (Toronto, 1978).

3 H. Nelles, The Politics of Development (MacMillan Company of Canada, Toronto,1974).

4 Canada, Commission of Conservation, "First Annual Report" (The Mortimer Co. Ltd., Ottawa, 1910).

5 In almost all cases the words "man" and "men" are used in conservation source material. In some cases these terms are used as generic terms meaning both men and women. In other cases, the term "man" or "men" often means just that. It appears from the literature that women's thoughts concerning nature are either included when speaking of "men" or are excluded when the term means "men" specifically. For the purposes of this study, the term "man" and/or "men" will be gender specific unless otherwise indicated.

6 H. Gale and J. Hendee, "Conservation an Upper Class Social Movement," *J. Leisure Researc.* V.1, p.246.

7 J.S. Maini and A. Carlisle, eds., "Conservation, Conservationists and the Canadian Scene" Conservation in Canada (Department of the Environment Canadian Forestry Service, Ottawa, 1974), p.1.

understanding of the origins of conservation in Canada. Alternative perspectives, based on different assumptions, are needed in order to broaden our understanding of the term.

A feminist perspective is not limited by the existing assumptions of the dominant viewpoint concerning conservation. Rather, it extends old boundaries to include social, psychological and personal aspects of conservation. It accords to women as well as men their place in the development of such a concept while delineating both their ideas and their roles. Both personal and public documents about women and written by women prove to be lucrative sources in support of this alternative viewpoint. This study will present, from a feminist perspective, prairie women's contributions to the development of the concept of conservation from 1890 to 1950. It suggests that women were significant contributors to the development of a conservation consciousness in Canadian society, a consciousness that provided the underpinnings for the development of a preservation ethic.

The concept of conservation consciousness is anything but straightforward. The historical material used in the research provides a way of giving meaning to the term. It puts the term into a workable context and provides a basis for understanding and interpretation. The concept of conservation , as expressed in the writing of prairie women, is not dependent upon an egocentric definition such as that expressed by Canada's first Commissioner of Conservation, Clifford Sifton, in 1910. "Conservation" he told the Canadian Club, "means the utilization of our resources in a proper and economical way for the benefit and advantage of the Canadian people.[8]

Instead, the concept for these women is more "woman bound" and

---

8 J. Foster, Working For Wildlife, p.41.

personal. It is more preservationist in scope and vision. It cannot be objectified and separated from themselves. Instead, it is a certain disposition and reflects a certain psychological tie to the land. It emphasizes the balance of nature. It acknowledges the need to live within the natural cycles of nature as opposed to the exploitive, linear thinking displayed by those who supported the frontier mentality. Conservation is not understood solely in economic and political terms. Rather it is understood in more personal terms, as a state of mind growing from personal experience, and rooted in the individual experiences of each woman with the land.

A state of mind suggests a degree of consciousness. This consciousness reflects the kind of awareness defined by the etymology of the word itself. The root is from the Latin "conscius" meaning "knowing something with others, knowing oneself." This emphasis on both the personal and the collective can be found in private as well as published writing of women and in the documents of a variety of organizations. This state of mind reflects not only thoughts about nature but emotions and sensibilities linked to it.

Both for prairie women whose writing and activities are documented, and for many contemporary Canadians, these sources articulate a mindset that predisposes a person to an integrated view of nature, a view of the self as part of the whole. While sharing some common understandings and ideas, this holistic, balanced and experiential view incorporates a great deal of diversity within its loosely-developed framework. There is no homogeneous sensibility about the land or nature. Rather, it is described in various ways by a variety of women. Some describe nature as home. Others as a spiritual place. Others seek nature as their refuge. A number express an aesthetic appreciation of its beauty. Still others seek meaning from their natural surrounding by addressing nature as an educational opportunity. Together these alternative viewpoints

express both a personal and a collective reality.

In a study of this type, the following question frequently arise: Does the feminist nature of the interpretation and the fact that women's points of view are being used negate its usefulness and accuracy as a scholarly document? While there exists a large and contradictory body of scholarship on this issue, only total skeptics would completely reject such feminist interpretation. For the most part, researchers acknowledge that despite tensions within the discipline of women's studies, feminist interpretation can broaden both our understanding of what constitutes history in a theoretical sense, while at the same time deepen our understanding of certain historical events and people. Further, the interdisciplinary nature of some feminist interpretation allows for framing historical questions in new and exciting ways. Thus, a feminist perspective validates the psycho-social perspective by interfacing personal with cultural norms and affirms the integration of women's inner and outer lives. It values the personal experiences of women. [9]

Perhaps one of the most significant challenges to the traditional historical method in the last two decades has been the issue of objectivity in dealing with the past. History is never absolutely objective. In recounting the past, contemporary historians deal with two major issues: first, recognizing the influence of their own personal assumptions on their research; and, secondly, acknowledging the limitations of their access to reliable sources. Intellectual historians are constantly confronted with sources which reflect feelings and attitudes. Such material cannot be easilty objectified and quantified, but is crucial in helping to better understand, in this case, women's attitude to nature.

---

[9] J. Kelly, Women, History and Theory (University of Chicago Press, Chicago,1984); and A. Lane, "Mary Ritter Beard: Woman as Force" Feminist Theorists Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers D. Spender, ed. (Random House Inc. New York, 1983).

By examining sources dealing with women's personal ideas and experiences, we expand the breadth of our vision and begin to posit a more complex view of nature than the commonly-held utilitarian view expressed by Clifford Sifton and the Commission of Conservation. Both intellectual and feminist historians acknowledge that this subjective approach to history provides new insights into the development of a collective conservation consciousness, an area that has yet to be fully examined.[10]

My interest in the development of such a consciousness grows out of personal and professional concerns. Initial interest in the topic was piqued by the large and growing contemporary body of eco-feminist literature.[11] For the most part, this material suggests that women's environmental consciousness has been different historically from that of men.[12] If this is the case, it could be reasoned, then that a distinct women's viewpoint or consciousness must exist in historical documents related to conservation and nature.

Initial examination of source material echoed only the present lack of women's voices on this topic. Could it be that historically women were not consciously aware of nature? Did prairie women share the dominant view of

---

10 J. Kelly, Women, History and Theory (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984); and A.B. McKillop, "Historiography and Intellectual History," Cleo's Craft: A Primer of Historical Methods , T.A. Crowley (Copp, Clark and Pitman, Toronto, 1988); and P. Novick, That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question of the American Historical Profession (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988); and J. Higham, "Intellectual History and Its Neighbours," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (15 June, 1954).

11 Examples of this material include: R. Bleier, Science and Gender (Pergamon Press, New York, 1984); L. Birke, Women Feminism and Biology: The Feminist Challenge (Wheatsheaf Books Ltd. England, 1986); S. Griffin, Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside (Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1978); C. Merchant, The Death of Nature:Women Ecology and the Scientific Revolution (Harper and Row Publishers, San Francisco, 1980); S. Ortner, "Is Female to Male As Nature is to Culture?", Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview M. Zimbalist and L. Lamphere, ed. (Stanford University Press, California, 1974); R. Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk Towards a Feminist Theology (Beacon Press, Boston, 1983); M. Berman, The Re-enchantment of the World (Bantam Books, New Youk, 1984); and A.K. Salleh, "Deeper Than Deep Ecology," *Environmental Ethics* (V.6, 1984), p.342.

12 C. Merchant, The Death of Nature: Women Ecology And The Scientific Revolution.

land and support the dominant ideas concerning conservation? Were men's and women's ideas of nature identical ? Is it possible that prairie women did not contribute to the growth of conservation in any significant way? Answering these questions required widening the range of research to include not only government documents but source materials of a social and recreational nature. In addition, a survey of women's own writing proved essential in determining whether the issue of conservation was a priority to them.

As with any exploratory study of this kind, accessing source material was one of the greatest challenges. Existing bibliographies do not categorize material according to the interest of researchers investigating such a topic,and much of the material related to women and conservation is buried in the hundreds of personal files in numerous repositories. Further, the breadth of the topic itself provides its own challenge in determining what might logically be used as sources. Through a process of connecting different sub-topics and subjects, it became evident that sources dealing with women's roles within prairie society, recreational material documenting the development of various outdoor recreation organizations, and women's own writing would provide the greatest amount of appropriate material.

Examination of the records of social and recreation-based organizations such as the Canadian Girl Guides, the Natural History Society of Alberta, the Alpine Club of Canada, The Hostelling Association, and Women's Institutes proved to be a rich source of material. By using women's vantage points and by placing land, conservation, and nature issues within a social and psychological context, the researcher found a significant amount of material in the sources documenting the degree of women's involvement with the natural environment. From these documents, it is apparent that women were indeed involved in conservation; however their idea of conservation and the activities women were

involved in were different from the dominant prescription. Finally, records show their involvement with nature in many of these groups equalled and in some cases surpassed that of men. Additional investigation of sources uncovered suitable material in specific magazines, newspapers, and newsletters of the period.

While organizational documentation provides insight into how women lived out their commitment to nature, personal papers, diaries, correspondence and reminiscences provide a window for viewing individual women's thoughts, fears, and perceptions regarding nature and their personal relationship to it. These written documents and oral histories are important not only for what they tell us about women's relationship to nature, but they also provide a means of examining the cultural ideals shared by women of the period.

Much of the personal material is not of a reflective nature. Rather, it is descriptive, portraying the work and leisure activities of women's lives in general, including nature activity. A significant amount of the material paints word images of the surrounding landscapes. Much of this personal writing often conveys the authors' private thoughts. Some of the material emphasizes the beauty and expansiveness of the prairie; however, a significant amount addresses the more challenging aspects of the prairie such as grass fires and torrential rains, plague and sickness, harvesting and household work. Underlying all of the images is an unspoken consciousness about the land and the need to conserve it.

For the most part, such personal writing was not intended for publication. Unlike other forms of writing, it tends to be inconsistent in tone, varying with the mood and physical well-being of the writer. Consequently, the researcher must learn to detect moods and judge the validity of the material according to the social and political context in which it was written. Further, the volume of diary

material is extremely limited. In fact, the majority of women settling on the Canadian prairie did not have the time or inclination to keep a diary. Those who did write down their thoughts were most often well-educated women. Some of the early writers used their diaries simply to chronicle everyday events: "I went for a walk under the stars." "Mrs. Jones came for tea." "The mosquitoes are awful." [13] This material, while providing some insight into daily activity, provides little opportunity for gaining any real insight into women's attitudes about or perceptions of nature. However, a few writers used their diaries as a tool for working out their ideas and feelings. Such reflections are most helpful for our understanding of their relationship to nature.

In addition to diaries, a limited amount of unpublished and published material including manuscripts, poetry, novels, newspaper articles, song lyrics, and correspondence has been used. Personal correspondence is perhaps one of the best sources of material for a study of this kind. While there is no doubt writers generally put their best foot forward in their letters, painting word pictures of a rosy existence, it is in these documents that the writer's enthusiasm and excitement for nature and the need to protect it is most easily observed. Indeed, a set of letters written over a period of time offers the researcher an opportunity to document the changing attitudes of the writer. Books of letters such as Monica Hopkins' Letters From a Lady Rancher [14] are valuable in this regard.

In addition to the personal and published sources surveyed, material based on four interviews with women who grew up in Alberta during the first part of this century is included. These taped reminiscences while adding yet

---

[13] Such material is found in many personal diaries of women living on the prairies during this period including E. Hastings, Personal Papers, Diary and Letters (Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton); G. Casey George, Personal Papers and Letters, (Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton); Mrs. Hazelwood, Personal Papers and Letters, (Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton); Mrs. R. Holmes, Diary, (Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton).

[14] M. Hopkins, Letters From a Lady Rancher (Glenbow Museum, Calgary, 1982).

other voices to the collected material provided a means of testing out assumptions developed from the written source material of other women of the period.

The variety of source material used for this study reflects both the nature of the research and the reality of women's involvement and relationship with conserving nature. To gain some insight into the development of a conservation consciousness it is necessary to acknowledge the diversity of women's involvement. This diversity reinforces the idea that there is no one idea regarding conservation consciousness stemming from women's involvement Rather, there are several different connections with nature that together form a framework.

Today, thousands of Albertans spend hundreds of thousands of hours involved in environmental activities. In addition, thousands of people flock to provincial and national parks for a wide range of leisure activities. Nature is no longer thought of as a place to be dreaded, an empty wilderness.[15] As recreationists, it is incumbent upon us to understand not only the motivation behind such heightened interest in nature and conservation, but the historical roots of this concern and involvement. Such understranding will help recreationists develop new policies and programs more congruent with today's preservationist ethic.

Chapter two describes the dominant view of conservation as it existed between 1880 and 1950. In so doing, the influence of expansionist ideals and thoughts concerning nature is examined as well as the effect such viewpoints had on the concept of conservation at the time. Chapters three and four document an alternative view of nature and the influence this view had on the

---

[15] G.Altmeyer, "Three Views of Nature In Canada, 1893-1914" *Journal of Canadian Studies,* V.11,n.3,p.21.

developing conservation consciousness. Source material for these two chapters is primarily from nature and outdoor recreation documents as well as women's own writing. The final chapter briefly analyses some of the trends apparent in the material in relation to nature and the impact such understanding of nature has on a conservation consciousness.

Chapter 2

The Dominant View of Nature and Conservation, 1880-1950

During the last half of the nineteenth century, promoters of Confederation such as politicians George Brown and William McDougall, and well known public figures such as George Munro Grant, and Sandford Fleming, were successful in reshaping the image of the Canadian Northwest by manipulating the concept of nature. These men envisioned the entire area of Rupert's Land, the former Hudson's Bay Company domain, as an economic and cultural hinterland benefitting central Canada and unifying the Dominion. Based on new scientific data, on national and imperialistic dreams, and on a belief in man's ability to successfully manage the environment, the 'expansionists' created a vision of the West as a storehouse of natural resources and an agricultural paradise. Such positive thinking transformed the image of the West in twelve short years (1856-1869) from a hostile wilderness to a "land of opportunity", a virtual "garden of Eden."[1]

Initially conceived of as a hostile wilderness, the province of Alberta, established in 1905, became synonymous with resources for many Canadians. Lumber, minerals, and water power were necessary raw materials for the support of the burgeoning industrial and urban growth taking place across the country. Prairie land, in the southern part of the province was thought to be prime for the development of the necessary large and growing agricultural

---

1 D. Owram, Promise of Eden: The Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900 (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1980), p.4.

hinterland needed for eastern Canadian's growing consumer marketplace. In addition, the western area of the province with its natural beauty of mountains and foothills and the province's expansive north with an abundance of birds and wildlife provided the resources to support a growing international tourist industry.[2] Alberta's wilderness could be tamed for economic gain. Alberta was viewed as the perfect frontier for both raw opportunism and long term imperialism on the part of eastern politicians and businessmen.[3]

Over time, increased consumption, depletion of natural resources, and the inability of the prairie to produce to agricultural capacity in any consistent manner necessitated a re-evaluation of dreams and re-conceptualization of nature herself. Expectations regarding the ability of the prairie to produce to capacity on a regular basis were soon understood to be unrealistic. Nature's inattentiveness to settlers' perceived necessities forced thousands to leave their "Eden" and begin life again elsewhere. Those who remained were required to either accept nature's power or learn alternative ways of circumventing it. In two short decades, the idea of nature as an unlimited resource was dashed and the dream of Alberta as a perfect frontier was somewhat tarnished. The regional reality of a harsh, unrelenting landscape overshadowed the bright nationalistic idealism of the West as a potential paradise and land of plenty as first developed by the expansionists' dreams.

Rather than give up the dream completely, however, it was thought that the human element, man as manager of nature, would eventually tame the unwieldy frontier and usher in the hoped-for paradise. Thus, the view of nature as a "managed paradise" was born. Like the concept before it, the idea of nature as "managed paradise" was not initiated within the province. However,

---

2 L. Bella, Parks For Profit 1987.

3 H. Nelles, The Politics of Development 1974; and D. Owram, Promise of Eden 1980.

the concept became integrated into most Albertan's psyche and as such has provided a framework for the existing relationship between Albertans and the natural environment since that time.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Laurier's hopes for a prosperous western hinterland received widespread support. However, for many settlers enticed to the west --isolated, at the mercy of prairie weather, and homesteading marginal land -- the reality was increasingly incongruent with this idealistic vision of a prairie paradise. Nature did not always live up to the idealistic expansionist conceptualization. However, while some of the expansionists' dreams were faltering, the spirit of expansionism continued to grow and be strengthened by Canadian Government policies throughout the first half of this century. The belief in the utility of nature was, for the most part, unchallenged[4] and expansionistic optimism based on this belief is still evident in provincial resource policies of the early nineteen nineties.

Central to the expansionists' vision is a set of underlying utilitarian assumptions regarding nature and the availability of agricultural, timber, and mineral resources. This did not mean that they did not appreciate the beauty of nature or were unable to be inspired by it. On the contrary, they understood the feelings of adventure and the excitement connected with settling a new land. The expansionists were convinced that the Northwest was not a wilderness; however, the expansionists never lost sight of the fact that nature could and should be useful. Resources were essentially free for the taking, with their development encouraged as rapidly as possible. Moreover, the entire area was seen to be in need of management, of creating man-made order out of wild disarray. This perception, when it finally materialized, included the settlement of

---

4 D. Owram, Promise of Eden, 1980, p.4.

nomadic natives, the imposition of the square mile grid system, the construction of transportation networks as well as land clearing, predator control, and the extensive introduction of non-native plants and animals to the area. Information about the Northwest, once merely of quaint interest, was now being sought after for practical development purposes. Facts about climate, soil, timber, minerals, and water were collected and analyzed in a scientific manner. A holistic view of nature represented either by native spirituality, or by the Victorian "back to nature movement" had no place in the expansionist scheme. Nature was valuable only when useful and being used. The expansionists of central Canada and small town Alberta reduced the bounty of nature, in both theory and practice, to a profitable commodity.

Described by Owram in his book entitled Promise of Eden, the expansionists were a relatively narrow circle of friends with a singular vision who saw themselves as patriotic visionaries. They did not create for themselves any single institution for the development of their ideals. Rather, they worked through a number of organizations. At first, expansionism was wrapped in a patriotic flag; expansionists believed that the Northwest was essential to Canada's growth and well being as a country.[5] By 1870, expansionist belief in the potential of the Northwest and its ability for development was commonly held.

This nationalistic vision, combined with undaunting belief and expansive spirit, affected the prairie not only in a physical sense but contributed to other socially constructed concepts as well. There can be no doubt that the expansionists did much to reinforce and further develop the belief that nature was man's playground and that man's role was to control "mother nature." It was

---

5 This idea was one of the basic tenants of Canada's national policy.

expansionism that promoted the natural environment as all western development was premised on the use of natural resources. No longer could nature exist incognito as wilderness. Expansionism demanded that everything possible be known and understood about nature. How the seasons fluctuated from year to year, climatic conditions, rainfall, hours of sunshine. It was thought that such knowledge would allow for greater control of the land and its ability to produce. The expansionists called for an increase in use of nature, an increase in knowledge about nature, and an increase in awareness regarding the value of nature. These increases emphasized the use of nature. The value of nature was in its ability to produce. Nature was valuable only to the degree that it produced. Nature was money. Using nature was good for the economy and good for the nation. While the expansionist view became less appealing as the reality of Western homesteaders did not live up to expectations, the dream did not die; it changed. If nature would not provide in the expected manner then man was obligated to control nature in order to keep the dream of an abundant paradise alive. The dominion government pursued the expansionist dream and established the Commission on Conservation in 1909. This commission was instrumental in further developing the expansionist vision.

Examples of the pervasiveness of the expansionists' view of nature can be examined in dominion/federal development policies, agricultural development patterns, hunting and fishing sport activities, water mineral and timber development schemes and western settlement promotion.

Dominion/Federal Development Policies

In 1873, the Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch was created to take over the administration of federal public lands. In keeping with

the expansionist view of nature, the branch's primary responsibility was to survey, sell and lease agricultural, mining and forest lands of the Northwest.

By 1901, the Department of the Interior had already taken numerous steps to insure that natural resources of the Northwest were being well managed. In 1884, tracts of land were set aside on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in an attempt to protect the watersheds of Western Canada and in 1885, an order in council was drawn up, establishing the first National Park reserve at Banff.[6] In 1887, the reserve at Banff was confirmed as a park. The park was established with the passing by Parliament of the Rocky Mountains Park Act. This same act encouraged the exploitation of natural resources as long as it did not harm the park's scenic characteristics.[7] At the turn of the century, a fire protection service was inaugurated and ranchers were appointed to protect certain areas of timber.[8] In 1901, James Smart, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, called for a formal animal reserve be set aside to protect certain animal species in danger of extinction.[9] Those that were to receive such protection would include animals of interest to hunters such as elk and moose. Coyotes and wolves were not deemed in need of such protection. In 1906, the Dominion Forest Reserves Act was passed, protecting timber reserves which could be harvested at a later date. Despite the eventual establishment of a number of Dominion parks and the national and international significance of some of the early conservation policies, conservation was an adjunct to development deemed desirable and inevitable.

The Commission on Conservation, initiated by the dominion government,

---

6 L. Bella. Parks For Profit, p.14-16.
7 Ibid p.17-30.
8 Canada, Department of the Interior, Annual Report, 1900 pt. v, p. 3; House of Commons,Journals 1901, Appendix No. 1,p.245-260.
9 Canada, Department of the Interior, Annual Report, 1902, p. xiv.

is perhaps the best single example of the formalization of expansionist assumptions regarding nature. The purpose of the Commission was to create a permanent body of experts to investigate Canada's natural resources and to submit recommendations for their development and conservation.[10] The work of Canada's Commission was reinforced by the principles adopted by the North American Conservation Conference held in Washington in May 1908. One of the most influential guiding principles upon which the work of the Commission was based states:

> We recognize as natural resources all materials available for the use of (sic) man as means of life and welfare, including those on the surface of the earth, like the soil and the waters; those below the surface, like the minerals; and those above the surface, like the forests. We agree that these resources should be developed; used and conserved for the future, in the interests of mankind, whose rights and duties to guard and control the natural sources of life and welfare are inherent perpetual and indefeasible. We agree that those resources which are necessaries of life should be regarded as public utilities, that their ownership entails specific duties to the public and that as far as possible effective measures should be adopted to guard against monopoly.[11]

The Commission included representatives from each of the provinces, federal government officials, and a professor from each of the provincial universities of the time. There were no women members on the commission. This reflects the social mores of the period rather than a lack of women's interest in conservation. Clifford Sifton, was the first commissioner. It was he who summed up so succintly his view of conservation and thus nature:

> If we stand in the way of development, our efforts will assuredly be of no avail either to stop development or promote conservation. It will not however, be hard to show that the best and most highly economic development and exploitation in the interests of the

---

10 J. Foster, Working For Willdlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada, 1978.

11 North American Conservation Conference, Declaration of Principles, Sessional Paper No. 90, 1909, p.1.

> people, can only take place by having regard to the principles of conservation.[12]

Conservation, he told the Canadian Club in 1910 "means the utilization of our resources in a proper and economical way for the benefit and advantage of the Canadian people".[13] It appears that conservation did not mean preservation through non-use, but maximizing future profits through good management. Conservation implied managing forests for perpetual profits; mining coal to minimize waste; capping gas wells to reduce loss; retaining forests on watersheds to guarantee a steady water supply for agriculture; and farming such resources as fur, and buffalo. The concern was primarily with the "scientific" use of resources for long term economic gain.[14]

While nature was understood to be of economic benefit and therefore worth conserving, the benefit of nature as a resource for tourism was not overlooked.

> It is the attraction of tourists in which the value (of nature) consists and I would point out to the members of the Commission that money attracted this way has a peculiar economic advantage to the country that gains it. Can you realize how many sticks of timber it would take to produce $25,000,000 net, how many pounds of minerals, what quantities of cereals, or how much capital? But in this case our fish and game attract money brought in by tourists. This money is left with you, and represents a net gain, because, in return you give for it practically nothing more than a little bit of healthy amusement... I would ask that you take that view of it rather than the view which is apt to be taken by some people, that fish and game protection has no economic advantages and that it is all sentiment.[15]

Sifton and the members of the Commission were certain that good management of nature in all areas, would lead the country toward better utilization of its natural wealth since nature was money, and the country could

---

12 J. Foster, Working For Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada, p.38.
13 Ibid p. 41.
14 Canada, Commission of Conservation, Report of the the First Annual Meeting, Ottawa, Sessional Paper No. 52, January 18th to 21st, 1910.
15 Ibid p.79.

not afford to waste resources available to it.

From a nationalistic perspective, both the expansionists' dream of a western paradise and the dominion government's commitment to making the dream a reality through action were significant factors in developing a dominant concept of conservation based on the utility.of nature. This view understood conservation as a management plan closely intertwined with the economic and political frameworks operating during the period. Such a viewpoint provided little opportunity to conceive of nature as valuable in its own right, and even less opportunity to preserve such valuable resources undisturbed.

Agricultural Development

Most homesteaders supported the expansionist ideals regarding land and were eager to participate in transforming the wilderness to farmland. They were enthusiastic about railway branch lines, irrigation projects, road construction, and wheat pools. They co-operated in the establishment of community rural power and telephone systems and on a personal basis in all aspects of homesteading. Always forward thinking, the homesteaders desired modernization, farm expansion, mechanization, and livestock improvement. Later, farmers and agriculturalists were involved in fertilization, spraying, and hybridization programs in support of expansionist dreams.[16]

The Regional activities were supported and reinforced by the dominion government programs and policies. It became obvious to government officials that control of nature and resource management required a more skilled approach on the part of the farmer in dealing with land. To this end, continual

---

16 P. Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988.), p. 77.

access to updated information and farming techniques was necessary if farmers were to work their land to the optimum level. Consequently, experimental farms and nurseries were established while agricultural colleges provided updated programs for farmers. In addition, financial support was made available in the form of government assistance programs and subsidies. The dominion government also published a plethora of booklets on numerous agricultural topics as did many of the private seed companies.[17] The publications provided information on such topics as profitable poultry farming, care and management of turkeys, and results of drainage experiments, the importance of pure bred sires, and feeding innovations for swine. While some encouraged the feeding and care of songbirds, others published in the same year admonished farmers to eradicate coyotes. ground squirrels, the Canada thistle, dandelions, tumbleweed and even the common housefly.

The underlying theme of the dominant view of nature, as expressed in the literature of the period, understood nature to be a bountiful provider, what Altmeyer refers to as a "bountiful storehouse."[18] In Alberta enthusiastic support for such an idea was forthcoming from many prairie farmers. A Red Deer farmer, Leo Gaetz, went to great lengths to support such an understanding. Gaetz reported to the Federal Department of Agriculture in 1890 that the Red Deer area of the province was a virtual Garden of Eden.[19] He writes:

> It does not take any very great skill in farming. Even a novice like myself in average years can grow crops of grain - oats from 50 to

---

[17]See, for example, the Searle Grain Growers News Sheet, published and available on a regular basis to prairie farmers. See also Canada, Department of Agriculture, "Breeding, Feeding and General Management of Poultry". Part 1 & 2. Ottawa, Bulletin No. 54, February 1906. See also Canada, "Seasonable Hints." No. 17, July 1920 from: The Dominion Experimental Farms, published by authority of the Hon. S.F. Tolmie, Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa.

[18] G. Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada 1893 - 1914" in *Journal of Canadian Studies* v.11, n.3, p.21. Altmeyer explores three different views of nature operating during this period including nature as a storehouse, a benevolent mother, and a temple.

[19] L. Gaetz, "Report of Six Years Experience of a Farmer In The Red Deer District" (Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, 1890), p. 67.

> 75 bushels per acre, and weighing 45 to 50 pounds to the bushel; barley from 45 to 55 bushels to the acre and weighing from 54 to 57 pounds to the bushel; wheat from 35 to 40 bushels to the acre and weighing from 60 to 68 pounds to the bushel... I may say that I have seen greater things than these but I am not taking what is phenomenal under very exceptional and favourable circumstances, but I believe the average farmer with average care and application can realize five years out of six in Northern Alberta.[20]

For Gaetz, and for many other farmers in the first few years of farming, lack of skill was not a deterrent. Mother nature simply provided all that was necessary and farmers like Gaetz enthusiastically embraced her. However by the 1890's, this view of nature began to waver. Perceived abundance was not as easy or available as first hoped. As abundance became less possible the settlers' need for control over nature increased, as they attempted to maintain order, and live out their dream of an abundant west

Underlying the desire for control was the realization that nature was a useful commodity that required management in order to maximize and maintain its ability to produce.[21] Further, this view of nature reinforced the idea of man as master over nature a steward of the natural environment. Implicitly, the domination of nature was a key element of the Expansionist Program after 1890.

At the same time that farmers were intent on controlling and managing nature for agricultural purposes, there was also a move afoot to beautify the natural environment. At best this was an attempt to expand the idea of home into the vast prairie wilderness. At worst it was a symbolic activity which could be interpreted simply as marking of territory, more in line with the activity of a dog or cat. There can be no getting away from the fact that beautification plans

---

20 Ibid p. 67.

21 D. Owram, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Ideas of the West 1856-1900 (Toronto 1980); and J. Foster, Working For Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation In Canada (Toronto 1978); and L. Bella, Parks for Profit (Montreal 1987).

were to some degree expansionist activity signifying control by settlers over the natural environment. Programs such as the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Program, Arbour Days, and various Shelter Belt initiatives were attempts by settlers and government alike to provide symbolic barriers in a land that appeared to be without boundaries. Adding a sense of organization and structure to nature was thought to civilize it to a degree thus making it more controllable. While meeting with some initial success such programs often degenerated into civic holidays. For example, over time Arbor Day first celebrated as a public holiday, became an occasion for cleaning school yards.[22]

While the idea of beautifying nature in rural agricultural centres continued, urban centres were beginning to see nature as a useful commodity as well. Urbanites, many who had moved from rural settings often longed for the vast prairie landscape with its solitude, space, and clean air. Consequently, vacant lot committees were set up in both Calgary and Edmonton to beautify and provide a small natural sanctuaries for urban dwellers within the city limits. These parks and lots were thought to provide a space in which the spirit could be renewed and where the stresses of life could be eliminated.

Agricultural development of the west based on an expansionist vision conceptualized nature as a commodity to be used. While this view recognized that resources were limited and needed to be conserved, it also supported the idea that with good management the land would yield what was necessary. Finally, this view of nature assumed that man had control and was the steward of nature. This utilitarian view of nature has had a detrimental effect on the natural environment, resulting in the lack of understanding and valuing of the

---

22 D. Wetherell and I. Kmet, Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta, 1896-1945, (Canadian Plains Research Centre, Saskatchewan, 1990), p.31.

natural prairie and our human ability to conserve it.

For the most part, while western settlers were not the creators of such a perspective, they supported the view that nature could be controlled and believed in the ability of the land to provide for them. Up until the 1930's many prairie settlers continued to hold on to the image of nature as bountiful provider even though thousands of homesteads were abandoned and mother nature was anything but benevolent.

Lumbering and Mining

While agriculturalists looked to the south and central parts of Alberta, businessmen, federal government surveyors, and geological explorers turned their eyes to the northern half of the province. For most explorers and government surveyors, Northern Alberta was a virtual storehouse of minerals and timber. Reports between 1888 and 1907 to the federal government, by government surveyors such as Mr. McConnell, scientists such as John Macoun, religious leaders such as Bishop Clut, and local residents such as Mr. Alfred von Hamerstein from Athabasca, were quick to report the overwhelming availability of such resources and like the agriculturalists, these men were caught up in the perceived limitless quantities of resources and ease by which such resources could be turned into economic gain.

Reports of gold in the Peace River were a common occurrence. According to Mr. von Hamerstein:

> ... on Lake Athabaska, there is first-class galena -- none better. It carries gold, silver and copper. They assayed some of the product at Chipewyan and found that it carried roughly about six dollars or seven dollars worth of gold, and some copper. There is a big seam near Black Bay, and one can follow it up right along until it comes to an island. That is a very fine country for gold, and there

> have been several attempts to make something out of it, but the time is not ripe. [23]

While reports of gold often produced a great deal of excitement, it was finding of minerals such as iron, natural gas and oil which were seen as having a more long-term economic effect for the country as a whole. Reports in 1907 to a senate committee described an area which extends fifty miles along the road to McMurray as having "inexhaustible quantities"[24] of petroleum available for extraction. Mr. von Hamerstein said "he thought there was nothing like it in the world. He said he been in Texas, Kansas, and Indian Territory, and had looked over the asphalt beds in California, but found nothing to compare with it."[25]

Timber resources in Northern Alberta, according to federal government reports, were also considerable. Descriptions of the number of acres available, types of wood, size of timber, and available access to the resource were included in most reports between 1890 and 1907. There was indeed opportunity for lumbering operations to be established in Northern Alberta.

During the summer of 1910, Mr. W. Hayes, a capitalist and manufacturer of Duluth, Minnesota, made an exploratory trip through the Athabaska country. In an interview on his return to Edmonton he stated that "there was enough timber in the Athabasca district to supply western Canada for the next half century. Agricultural prospects could not be better, while copper, iron and gold had been found, and also petroleum, asphalt, limestone and oil. Fishing could be developed into quite an industry."[26] Hayes was not alone in his interest and explorations. Many other businessmen visited the northern parts of the province in search of development opportunities.

---

23 The Unexploited West compilation by E.J. Chambers (published under the direction of F.C.C. Lynch, Superintedent Railway Lands Branch, Department of the Interior. 1914), p.181.
24 Ibid p.185.
25 Ibid p. 185-186.
26 Ibid p. 177

In addition to timber and mineral resources, explorers and surveyors also recognized the valuable water power resources available. After a northern trip in 1910, the Honourable Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, stated:

> With such knowledge as we now possess it is safe to say that within a few years the water powers of the section of country under review (Slave Lake area) will constitute one of its most important natural assets.[27]

For Oliver, resources were to be used. Little did he realize that not everyone supported this idea. Just fourteen years later, a proposal for the development of a hydro power project in the Spray Lakes was met with a great deal of opposition from a variety of organizations perhaps signalling a turning point and reflecting a different sensitivity to nature and its use.

Hunting and Fishing Sports Activities

Commonly thought of as recreational sport activities, hunting and fishing fulfilled another expansionist role during the first half of this century. Through hunting and fishing excursions, men often discovered natural resources and development subsequently resulted. Advertising agents for the CPR railway such as W. Robson were quick to relay stories of hunters who, while relaxing and enjoying the benefits of the great outdoors, were able to discern the commercial value of water, timber, and mineral resources in the areas visited. On occasion, such recreational visits led to the staking of claims, followed by the establishment of companies and the development of natural resources.[28] Although Robson's words could be seen simply as boosterism, they could also be interpreted as more serious encouragement of sport activity as a form of

---

27 Ibid p.177

28 The Unexploited West, Department of the Interior, Railway Lands Branch, 1914 p.v, vi.

business development and resource exploitation.

International visitors were willing to pay high prices for the experience of hunting or fishing in Canada's wilderness. Such trips lasted from a few days to weeks and often resulted in a "full bag".[29] In one case a story was told of a man from Chicago who in 1920, spent thirty thousand dollars on a trip to the Rocky mountains, in which he was able to kill a mountain sheep.[30] Recreational hunting became a lucrative economic activity which continued to grow in spurts throughout the first part of this century. The dominion government encouraged such activity and embarked on developing regulations to insure ample supplies of specific species of interest to hunters.

For some settlers living in the Northwest during the first part of the century hunting was an important subsistence activity; but in some areas, however, wild game became relatively scarce as settlement increased. For example, in Camrose Alberta in 1912, residents could still hunt small game such as prairie chicken, grouse, partridge, and geese close to town.[31] However, it was necessary to travel a day or two from home to hunt big game.

As settlement increased and game populations were depleted, it became necessary to provide regulations limiting the hunting seasons and the maximum number of game to be bagged. In 1884, the North West Territories Council passed an ordinance to protect birds and big game animals. Big game hunting was restricted to the winter months and hunting of waterfowl was allowed in the spring and summer months. In addition, Sunday hunting was prohibited. [32] These laws were adopted by Alberta in 1905 and became the

---

29 D. Wetherell and I. Kmet, Useful Pleasures p.166.
30 Ibid p.166.
31 Ibid p.166.
32 Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 2,1884.

basis for game legislation for the next half century.[33]

By 1913, a total ban on antelope hunting was needed to save the few remaining.[34] Other wildlife seriously depleted as a result of drought, expanding settlement, and over hunting included prairie chickens , ducks, mountain sheep, moose, and deer.

Not only big game needed protection. Upland birds and waterfowl were suffering to an even greater extent despite the International Ordinance supported by the United States and Canadian governments. Many Albertans questioned the point of protecting birds particularly ducks, simply to have them killed by Americans as they returned south each fall. Although federal protective legislation continued to be strengthened in order to protect wildlife and the provincial governments such as Alberta began hiring enforcement officers, Albertans were continuing to kill wildlife at an alarming rate.

In 1928, in Alberta the Fish and Game Association was established to enhance fishing and hunting opportunities for its members. It advocated the initiation of conservation practices thus insuring the availability of wildlife and fish on a continuing basis for hunting and fishing pleasure. The Alberta Fish and Game Association worked in conjunction with the provincial government to increase both the number and types of birds. They imported non-indigenous birds such as partridge and co-operated in developing a ban on hunting such birds until their numbers to could increase. By the 1930's most hunting by white men was done for recreational purposes.

Ducks Unlimited, an American organization, began work in Alberta in 1938. Their primary goal was to serve its members most of who lived in the United States. Since eighty percent of ducks shot by Americans nested in

---

33 D. Wetherell and I. Kmet, Useful Pleasures, p. 167.

34 Ibid, p.169. The ban was lifted in 1934.

Western Canada, restoration of the duck population had to begin there. Consequently, the organization became involved in extensive land and water management, predator control, and breeding programs in an attempt to increase the depleting duck population. The organization obtained a degree of support from Canadian prairie settlers but some Alberta farmers were opposed to the programs, believing increased numbers of migratory birds had the potential for increasing crop damage. In 1946, the United Farm Workers of Alberta passed a resolution at their annual meeting demanding an increase in the cost of duck hunting licences and compensation for the destruction of crops by ducks and other migratory birds.

Fishing was not an equally popular recreational activity. For the most part it was isolated to the foothills and mountain areas. The 1913 regulations required permits and established seasons and limits . Restocking of depleted species as well as the introduction of new species was viewed as necessary and desirable for tourist expansion. Fish conservation measures were less controversial because recreational fishing seldom conflicted with farming.

In the Northwest, hunting and fishing were not seen simply as a recreational activity. Instead they were a development tool to encourage both local and international tourism. In addition, these activities were used as a means of encouraging international interest in resource development. Recreational hunting and fishing were sports enjoyed primarily by urban males while farmers were more likely to hunt for subsistence and crop protection. Both, urban hunters and fishermen and farmers displayed a highly interventionist attitude toward nature.

Human Resources

Expansionist visions of nature had an affect, not only on how nature was conceived, but on how settlers were to relate to it. It was clear from the beginning, that if men were to settle this new land then women would also require a role. Social and cultural perceptions concerning the percieved differences between men and women had already determined that women's role was to be different than that of men. Men were to be the farmers and women the culture bearers and helpmates of the society. To this end, government departments and individual entrepreneurs aggressively advertised overseas for women to in an attempt to lure them to the west. Private entrepreneurs such as C.T. Lewis developed a national recruitment scheme to entice women to the prairie. In an eighty four page leaflet entitled "The World's Return Rebate Marriage Certificate" Lewis proposed a rebate for any man who travelled east in search of a wife and returned with a bride.

Most of the literature developed for recruitment purposes made it abundantly clear that women were not expected to establish farms. Rather, they were to function as a helpmate to the men settling the land. This role of helpmate was seen as important given the fact that settlement was such an enormous task and as much help as possible was needed in taming nature and taking from her the resources that would be of economic benefit to those who were willing to pay the price. Within the role of helpmate, women would act as wife, housekeeper, child rearer, and extra farmhand when needed.

Woman's prescribed role often removed women from any direct contact with resource extraction. However, necessity often required that women be responsible for tending a garden, raising chickens, and making butter. Although most women filled the prescribed challenge of helpmate and civilizer there were

some who bought land and farmed. In 1917 a household editor of a weekly agricultural newspaper reported that there were fewer than twenty-one women farmers in Alberta at the time.

In the home, women harvested, conserved and preserved out of economic necessity. These were not skills that women brought with them; rather, preserving and re-using material were survival techniques learned quickly through on-the-job training. Old curtains were transformed into new skirts, sugar bags became pillow cases and worn pieces of clothing often found their way into prized patchwork quilts. Isolation prompted innovation and the idea of "making do" was a well worn concept readily applied by almost all prairie women regardless of ethnic, economic or social background.[35]

It appears that from the very beginning women had a prescribed role in which social and cultural expectations differed from that of the men. There can be no doubt that women were affected by nature as much as were men and yet they were not expected to tame nature in the same way men were. Rather they were to "make do" with what was handed to them. Thus for most women living on the prairie during the first part of this century, conservation was not thought of in economic and political terms. Rather, conservation was viewed from a different perspective. Conservation was a pragmatic concept connected with survival of one's self and one's family. It did not have the same economic and political overlay that it did for most male settlers.

For the most part, conservation activity in Alberta in the first half of this century was not seen as an essential activity by federal and provincial government officials. Agricultural land, forests, mineral deposits, and

---

35 Descriptions of women's role are well documented in E. Silverman, The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier 1880-1930, (Eden Press, Montreal, 1984); and Rasmussen et al, A Harvest Yet To Reap. (The Women's Press, Toronto, 1976).

recreational opportunities and settings appeared to be inexhaustible. Conservation measures most often took the form of forest fire protection programs, inventories of resources, insect protection, and site preservation for recreational programming. Conservation for economic gain was the primary focus. This utilitarian view extended into the recreational areas of hunting and fishing as well. Because of the perceived lack of interest regarding conservation on the part of the new settlers, many conservation activities were introduced by the federal government. It was not until 1924 that settlers spoke out regarding the use of the Spray Lakes for the development of a hydro electric project. This is the first time such a preservationist perspective is publicly voiced in a political and economic framework; however, it appears that women were involved in developing this alternative consciousness regarding conservation long before this public outburst happened. This alternative view will be explored in the next two chapters.

Chapter 3

An Alternative View of Nature

The landscape is the most immediate medium through which we attempt to convert culturally shared dreams into palpable realities.[1]

Conservation, in the expansionist view, was predicated upon the need for deliberate and methodical resource development, while the popular idea of preservation was limited to the awareness that certain 'beautiful" natural areas had economic potential based on their scenic value.

Conservation, which understood nature to be merely a resource for development emerged long before the majority of women settled on the prairie and is well recorded in official documents from the fur trade, biological survey expeditions, government reports and Hansard. Naturalists such as Hector, Thompson, and Henday roamed the Northwest documenting the natural potential of the area. Politicians and government officials as early as 1850 recognized the recreational potential of the west and established Banff National Park in 1885. By 1913, Alberta was one of the most conserved provinces in the country.[2] Experimental farms, and forest reserves sprouted up across the prairie provinces. Regardless of a seemingly high degree of interest in conservation, business interests by the 1930's were eager to dam lakes and rivers in National Parks in an attempt to provide hydro electric power for

---

1 A.Kolodny, The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860 (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1984), p.xii.

2 *Alberta Naturalist* Special Issue, n.1, 1981, chapter 1.

domestic and export use.[3]

Missing from most of the official historical records related to conservation and nature are the voices of women who, for countless reasons, found themselves on the prairies. Even a quick overview of diaries, correspondence, and reminiscences of prairie women shows that, almost without exception, nature is mentioned consistently even if simply to chronicle the daily ebb and flow of the weather . These diaries and personal writings show that some loved nature and some hated it. Few were ambivalent. For those who deliberately or voluntarily chose to make their home on the prairies, their awareness of the environment deepened and their attitudes towards nature intensified. Such changes resulted in women adapting to new roles where nature was concerned while all the time being sensitive to their relationship to it.

This chapter gives voice to a variety of women whose experiences come together to form an alternative view of nature. Some of these voices are negative; some are exuberant and positive. It is important to hear all their voices, in order that we can better understand their connections with their new environment.

Nature as Man's Domain

The Victorian and Edwardian convention was for women to find nature aesthetically pleasing; however, the published writing of these women often went beyond this to express a genuine love of nature through the word images and drawings. These images can be found in the personal, autobiographical, and fictional work of women. In Kathleen Strange's novel With the West In Her

---

3 A. Mason, "William Pearce and the Spray Lakes Controversy " (Unpublished paper, Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Alberta, 1984).

Eyes, she describes such a rural image by contrasting it to urban existence.

> What a beautiful morning it was. So fresh and sweet. I looked around and almost had to pinch myself to make sure that what I was seeing was really true. No streets of houses; no smoke from chimney pots; no rattling street cars or scurrying automobiles. Instead, wide vistas of fields and brush patch; the lake glittering in the distance; the sky overhead so blue that if one had splashed such vivid colour on a canvas it would have been criticized as being unnatural.[4]

Women came during the settlement years (1890-1930) eager or at least reconciled to make a new home. Often they came because of someone else's decision. Some came without possessions and without ties. Some came hoping to shape the environment into a more comfortable and recognizable form. Not all women were attuned positively to the prairie setting and even those who were more optimistic recognized the barriers and negative aspects to their chosen home. For some women, the prairie simply did not live up to their expectations and for a few, the vast landscape itself fuelled melancholy, loneliness and a psychological dis-ease. The reality of making a home on the wide open prairies often dashed their hopes and dreams. Instead of the promised paradise "what they found was a land that was too wet or too dry, a forest that was too dense of the vistas too bare. The best they could do was accommodate necessity by providing their unpaid and often unvalued labour for the family's survival."[5] Many were not successful and abandoned the prairies. For those who remained, it took a long time and much learning to be able to call their new environment home.

It is important to recognize that despite corporate entrepreneurs and government propagandists, encouraging women to settle the prairies, women's roles were different from those established for men. Men were to

---

4 K. Strange, With The West In Her Eyes (George J. McLeod Ltd., Toronto, 1937) p.29-30.
5 E. Silverman, The Last Best West, p.73.

manipulate and control the natural resources and turn the prairies into a "Garden of Eden." Women were to bring gentility and civility to an otherwise harsh environment. Simply put, men were to tame nature and women were to establish homes and develop cultural stability.

Whatever their goals and regardless of their roles -- wife, mother, sister, homemaker, teacher, artist -- women arriving in the Canadian West in the first part of the century became Canada's first environmentalists.[6] They followed the examples of women such as Catherine Parr Traill and Suzanna Moodie who settled in Ontario more than fifty years before. Like Moodie and Traill, many of these women were well educated and motivated to learn as much as they could about their new "home". Learning most often took the form of "on the job training", acquiring new skills necessary for survival. Those who were less formally educated but who had rural backgrounds applied their knowledge and skills to the new environment immediately. According to one observer, country women were strong women: "There were fine faces among the country women... strong mouths and straight eyes and foreheads as of those who looked fate in the face and had not been cornered. They were full of hospitality and kindness."[7]

In the diaries, letters, and other personal writing of such women were descriptions of survival skills and stories of their relationships to nature and attitudes concerning conservation. Further, the reminiscences of women who settled in Alberta in the first half of the twentieth century add intimate detail to the more formal documentation. Many of these women have clear memories of

---

6 The term environmentalist refers to a person operating within an "ecological framework." The concept of ecology was just beginning to develop in North America in the latter part of the 1800's. In fact, the term "ecology" was coined by an American woman, Ellen Swallow, in 1892 from a Greek word "oikos" meaning house.

7 E. Mitchell, In Western Canada Before the War: Impressions of Early Twentieth Century Prairie (John Murray Publishers, England, 1914), p.39.

saving string and glass jars, recycling metals for the war effort, patching and altering garments, trading garden seeds, composting, and feeding slop to the pigs and corn husks to the cows. The concepts of "recycle", "reuse" and "make do" were common to these prairie women. They remember both the psychological and physical hardships of life on the prairie, and they often undervalue their own accomplishments in addressing such hardships.

No matter how many times they were told that this was the "promised land" to some it felt like an empty wilderness. Women were disallowed by the Homestead Act from acquiring the one hundred and sixty acres of free land which was available to men. Not until the 1917 Dower Rights Act were widows allowed to hold title of the land they homesteaded with their husbands. Exclusion from ownership affected women's perceptions of nature and their relationship to it. Some did not care about homesteading and could not wait to return home, while for others it was the issue that turned their mind to politics.[8]

Most women recognized that the west was a "man's land". Jessie Saxby noted the lack of women in the west: "...I gazed on rich lands with here and there a sign of man's presence and scarcely anything to tell that woman was in the territory at all."[9] Monica Hopkins, a rancher's wife, recognized that even when women did come to settle there were still other problems for them to overcome. She believed this harsh and hostile land had no place for women, and if women were to survive they would need to become like men.

> By now I realize that this is essentially a man's country and that woman has practically to sink her own identity and take on her husband's interests. For a woman to come out here and by "here" I mean isolated spots such as this is, and not like the country would be fatal... interest in her husband's pursuits is absolutely

---

8 U. MacLean, "The Honouable Irene Parlby," *Alberta Historical Review* 1(2) 1959, p.2.

9 J. Saxby, West N'orWest in S. Jackel's A Flannel Shirt and Liberty (University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1982). p.32-33.

necessary.[10]

For some women, the thought of giving up their identity caused a great deal of psychological pain and did not help in their ability to adjust or accommodate:

> I saw what I had landed at! It was rather forbidding; it was dreadful. It was a wild country in those days here, not unruly, not unsafe, but nothing was completed. It was a raw, man's world, not for women. At times I was pretty broken-hearted but it was my own doing. I could have stayed in the old country but I preferred to be with my husband and rough it with him.[11]

Nature as an Unreliable Home

In addition to recognizing the maleness of the prairie environment Francis Dickie suggests that the fickleness and unreliability of nature was overwhelming for some women. In her poem, "Digging Up Beauty" Dickie emphasizes the randomness of life on the prairie and the difficulty one would have in planning and organizing a life.

> A Dash of Old Dame Nature
> A bit of the by-product of Henry Ford
> A Bob Rancher's hobby,
> And most important of all the queer workings of blind chance.
> ...with such a recipe mixed in the wilderness of the Alberta badlands, almost anything could happen.[12]

Many of the women who settled on the prairies recognized the natural environment as one of their greatest physical and emotional challenges, a wilderness in which the feelings of isolation and melancholy could become overwhelming. Everything about the new environment, including the "moaning of the prairie winds in the dead grasses and about the buildings, or the still cold

---

10 M. Hopkins, Letters from a Lady Rancher Introduction ix

11 E. Silverman, The Last Best West , p.7.

12 F. Dickie, "Digging Up Beauty" from Notebook #4 Folklore Project Material, (University of Alberta, u.p. n.d.)

night, and lugubrious yelp of the coyotes added the last touch to their loneliness and desolation."[13] A diary entry by Mrs. Inderwick dated January 5th, 1884 acknowledges the degree to which the natural environment added to her sense of melancholy and limited her sense of well being.

> Another very cold day ... woke up with such a desolate feeling that I just turned over and cried myself into a headache then I could not get up I was so miserable however turned out at eleven -- Put in the day ... but it was an awful drag -- went to sleep on the lounge at six. Took no tea -- woke up at seven to find the fire black. So went to bed in disgust ... I am sick of the W.W. !![14]

A month later she continues; " I am tired of looking out of the window over those white hills... It makes me tired to think how often I have looked..."[15]

The ability of nature to cause depression did not dissipate as the province became more settled. Between 1900 and 1920, women reported to be affected negatively by the natural environment:

> On the whole, southern Alberta has not impressed me favourably. The great bare spaces, magnified and rendered unnatural by the atmospheric peculiarities... and the arrogant sunshine get on my nerves.[16]

Personal depression brought on by the landscape was captured in the words of Gertrude Balmer Watt: "I won't be buried in this God Forsaken Country." [17] Mary Cran lamented, "O the prairie vastness, dreariness, loneliness is appalling."[18]

Although the west may have been a land of promise for men, for some women it was a land requiring too much accommodation and change. According to one source "the secret of "getting on" in a new country lies in

---

13 E. Kells, Elizabeth McDougall, Pioneer (United Church Publishing House, Toronto, 193-) p.42.
14 Mrs. C. Inderwick, "A Lady and Her Ranch" *Alberta Historical Review*, 15, n.4, 1884.
15 Ibid, February 19, 1884.
16 E. M.Eliot, My Canada (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), p. 138.
17 G. B. Watt, A Woman In the West , (The News Publishing Company, Edmonton, 1907), p.26.
18 M. G. Cran, A Woman in Canada, (J.\Milne, London, 1910), p.5.

casting off the trammels of old-world habits, and in learning quickly to be "in touch" with novel surroundings."[19] Not only were they required to deal with early snowfalls, hoards of mosquitoes and flies, unexpected floods and prairie fires, long winters and mud! For many women the physical and psychological challenge was too much. Elsie Deny[20] understood the effect the environment had on many women's psyches. She states, "nature was most often a barrier to self expression and self development." Her version of "proving up" was to move to the city - leaving the country behind. Over time Elsie's urban perspective allowed her to appreciate the country; however ,the country held no future for her. It was not a promised land. For Elsie and for many more like her, living close to nature did not provide the necessary security required to support themselves and the families.

Nature as Freedom and Adventure

While some interpreted the forced adaptation to their environment as negative, other women were intrigued by the challenge. For them, settling in a new country was an adventure.

The diary of sixteen year-old Maude Puchette Nodwell describes her move from Stillwater, Oklahoma to an area near Vegreville, Alberta in 1903. As far as Maude understood, Alberta was a wilderness. In her entry dated Wed. Sept. 30th, 1903, she wrote, "Papa has been up there(Canada) since May. He is camping on a section of land for the family, out there in the wilderness."[21] Her perceptions of Alberta as wilderness only provided more of a challenge and her

---

19 Ibid p. 72.
20 E. Deny , Interview October, 1989. Edmonton.
21 M. Puckette Nodwell, Diary, from Folklore Project, (University of Alberta Special Collections 1903), p.1.

entry dated December 21st, 1903 captures her excitement:

> Coming here is all very strange, but I like it. The snow is too dry to even stick to our clothing or to make a snow man, it crunches under our feet, Mam calls it "hominy" snow, because it really is like tiny particles of ice, and there are drifts, deep drifts that we walk right over on a hard thick crust... We stood outside and watched the Aurora Borealis last night, it's like a thin white curtain swinging across the dark northern sky, it's fascinating... I feel like I'm starting a great adventure.[22]

For many women such as Maude, it was a great new adventure indeed. Most of these women chose to come West. Their appreciation of nature was conscious, often taking the form of acceptable leisure pursuits such as tramping off to birdwatch or joining friends for an afternoon of painting or specimen collecting.

Most women, including central European peasant women, had to learn about their new environment to survive. Settling the prairies was not all adventure. In fact, a great deal of hard mundane work was required. The rigors of homesteading on the often harsh frontier-- home building, food production, child rearing-- demanded new degrees of self-sufficiency and adaptability. In addition, many women also fulfilled social expectations as community organizers and educators. For example, as well as teaching mathematics and history, teachers almost without exception, included nature study in their daily school routine. An afternoon class spent in a nearby slew or field were commonplace occurrences.[23]

Whether motivated by leisure interests, humanitarian desires or sheer survival, women who came to settle on the prairies were required to expand their involvement with nature on both personal and social levels. The results of such experiences helped in developing a regional consciousness of nature; a

---

22 Ibid, p.20.

23 Chapter 4 will deal with nature and organizational involvement in more depth.

consciousness that was often felt and sometimes acted upon, most often experienced and sometimes verbalized; a consciousness that was aesthetic and yet pragmatic, more holistic than anthropocentric.

Nature themes, such as love of nature, a theoretical knowledge of the environment and a practical understanding of living are common in the musings of many women. Their contact with nature at first developed from a variety of daily experiences. Tending gardens, pounding fence posts, carrying water, planting seeds, making butter or tending chickens, they allowed women to observe and question that which they did not fully understand. These experiences were new for most women and by being sensitive to nature they were rewarded by it. Their openness, coupled with a feeling for nature and a unique sense of connection to it allowed women to respond personally to it. They wrote of nature not as place but as home. They walked on the prairie and took note of the big dipper. They pondered the spider on the newly spun web in the window of their kitchen. They decorated and beautified their surroundings by extending their care and nurture to flower beds and shelter belts outside of the front and back doors of their home. They drew and stenciled and stitched prairie flowers in minute detail on household items and proclaimed beauty of a field of wildflowers in their poetry and prose. They drew word pictures of nature which were small in scale and based on familiar everyday events of their lives yet reflect a broader concern for of caring and connection with their surroundings.

For many women the prairies translated, not only to "adventure" but to "new beginnings" and most of all "freedom". "The open land with its seemingly unending opportunity for running wild and free offered girls a glimpse of something like freedom. The vagaries of crops of weather of institutions like schools, open one term and closed the next and of rapid growth, evoked the

knowledge that life could be transitory and tenuous, and not well-rooted in the past. " [24] The idea of freedom, for some women was extremely enticing - enough so, that they packed their bags and headed for Canada.[25]

Nellie McClung, the well known writer and political activist of the period believed living close to nature was a healthy way to live and that rural life provided a better alternative for living than did urban life.

> The great wide uncultivated prairie seems to open its welcoming arms to the land-hungry, homeless dwellers of the city, saying "Come and try me. Forget the past, if it makes you sad. Come to me, for I am the Land of the Second Chance. I am the Land of Beginning again."[26]

This notion of rural life as being the better life was not a new idea. It was the basis on which various reform campaigns including the city beautiful playground movements were organized.[27]

The West nurtured hope in many women; hope for a new life, hope for new found freedoms, and hope for the future.

> This is a land of mighty possibilities where the people on the soil grow to have wonderful confidence in it , as a friend that will be good to you, if you are good to the West . . . it holds the hope and future of the race.[28]

Mrs. Irene Parlby, a settler in the Red Deer area in 1896, was a crusader for social and legislative reform, recalled the wonderful and unique opportunities provided by nature for those first settlers. She said;

---

24 E. Silverman, The Last Best West.

25 The total number of women who settled on the prairies between 1880-1950 is not known; however, census figures show that in 1890/91 there were 10,628 females; 1901 there were 18,603 females; in 1906 there were 44,075 females; in 1911 there were 150,674 females living in Alberta.

26 N. McClung, In Times Like These , (D. Appleton, New York, 1915) p.97.

27 In 1884, C.P. Mulvany, M.D. described parks as the lungs of the city. He believed that they were needed to secure the health, moral as well as physical aspects of the city. For additional information concerning this idea See, E. McFarland, The Development of Public Recreation in Canada (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 1970); also S. Markham, The Development of Parks and Playgrounds in Selected Prairie Cities, (University of Alberta, 1986).

28 G.B. Watt, Town and Trail (The News Publishing Company, Edmonton, 1908)p.37.

> First of all, I think, came the exhilarating feeling of living where the world was really young, where there were no people crowding in on you with their miserable, silly little conventions, and pettinesses and prejudices and all the other barnacles people grow when they congregate together in community. The freshness, the spaciousness, the extra-ordinary quietness of an unpeopled land, the absence of all complications, stresses, worries, and what not of life. I feel sorry for the late comers who had not that experience.[29]

In reading the diaries and personal correspondence of many of these women one is struck by the extremes of weather and landscape and the ever changing pace of life reflected in the natural environment. Moira O'Neill, a well-known Albertan writer and ranch woman expresses her connection with nature.

> I like the endless riding over the endless prairie, the winds sweeping the grass, the great silent sunshine, the vast skies, and the splendid line of the Rockies guarding the West.
>
> I like the herds of cattle feeding among the foothills, moving slowly from water to water; and the bands of horses travelling their own way, free of the prairies. I like the clear rivers that come pouring out of the mountains, with their shining reaches of swift water where we fish in the summer-time; and the little lakes among the hills where the wild ducks drop down to rest on their flight to the north in spring... I like both the work and the play here, the time out of doors and the time for coming home. I like the summer and the winter, and the monotony and the change. Besides I like a flannel shirt and liberty.[30]

Nature as Beauty

Not only were some women fascinated by the contrasts of nature, they were overwhelmed by its beauty, a beauty that for some was not sufficiently written about. Mrs. George Cran, herself a writer made mention of this fact in her book about Canada.

> It (the book) talked of so many bushels to the acre, so many acres

---

29 The Honourable I. Parlby, from *Alberta Historical Review* 7(2), 1959, p.2.
30 M. O'Neill, "A Lady's Life on a Ranch", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* CLXIII, January, 1898, p.6.

> to the farm, so many feet of snow to the month, so many days of drought to this and so on. One book left a vivid picture of the hardships of homesteading another told of the political value of the country but none talked of the scenery.[31]

Writing about nature's beauty or the need to preserve it was not an uncommon thing for Canadian women to do. Women such as Mabel Francis Whittemore[32] and Isobel Priestly[33] were instrumental in establishing nature journals in Ontario and Saskatchewan. In addition, the Audubon journal and the Canadian Alpine Journal often carried articles by prairie women[34].

A surprising number of Alberta women wrote nature books of various kinds between 1890-1940. In what appears to be a response to Cran's criticism they wrote descriptions and drew specimens in an attempt to capture the beauty of nature surrounding them. For example, women like Hilda Buckman Crook, Elsie Cassels, Mina Cole, Jessie Saxby, and Mary Schaffer, all wrote nature articles which were published in a variety of newspapers and farm journals on a regular basis. Women such as Catherine Barclay, Mary Belle Barclay, Mary Schaffer and Annora Brown wrote about their experiences with nature in books which were published. Two Albertan women Marion Moodie and Mary Walcott were recognized by the scientific community for their abilities in botany.

Marion Elizabeth Moodie (1867-1958) a graduate of Calgary General Hospital Nursing Program established herself as a botanist early in the century. She was commissioned to prepare a collection of native plants and grasses for

---

31 G. Cran, A Woman in Canada p. 10

32 J. Bennett, "The Woman Behind the Magazine," in *Nature Canada* Fall, 1989. Vol. 18, No.4. p48.

33 I. Priestly lived in Yorkton Saskatchewan. She was instrumental in establishing the Yorkton Natural History Society in the 1930's and the journal *Bluejay*.

34 E. Parker was the editor of the Alpine Journal which was aimed at providing information and protection of the Alpine environment and Mabel Osgood Wright was the editor of Birdlore an American Publication aimed at bird protection and study. In both cases these journals were widely read in Alberta as were several other nature oriented magazines and journals established between 1900 and 1930 in Canada. In all cases, women contributed to these publications on a regular basis.

the Alberta Government. Some of her material was sold to the Smithsonian Institute, the New York City Botanical Gardens, Harvard and Stanford University and the field Museum in Chicago.

Women like Mary Vaux Walcott created watercolour paintings of wildflowers that attracted national attention. In 1925 the Smithsonian Institute published a five volume set of watercolour drawings entitled North American Wildflowers. The volumes contained more than four hundred reproductions and descriptions including some poetic references and a description of the circumstances under which some were painted. Also included in the volumes were facts for using such plants for medicinal purposes.

Since the early 1900's, many women were in awe of the beauty of the natural prairies. Whether they were settlers or visitors, their personal and more public comments captured the excitement they felt about the landscape. In her book entitled, A Woman In the West, Gertrude Balmer Watt describes a prairie summer day.

> Is there anything in the world one-half as appealing as a perfect summer day on the Canadian Prairies? How the air transmits sounds and what an awakening prophetic character all sounds have! The chirping of birds from the nearby thicket, the distant lowing of a cow, the whirring of the wild ducks overhead, seem from out of the heart of nature and to be a call forth. Across the fields one catches a fleeting glimpse of a modest-thatched homestead, with its comfortable barns and out-houses huddled close in the rear. Way off a farmer is working in the fields while near-by herds of cattle are cropping the grass that has gone to make the Canadian West famous.[35]

Even though hard work and disappointment made up a significant part of Myrtle Campbell's life her ability to maintain a sense of awe and wonder of nature is captured in her pieces of correspondence. Her letter dated May 6th, 1921 begins:

---

35 G. Balmer Watt, A Woman in the West p.

> How I wish you could be up here this lovely morning. The air is so fresh and clear and good to breath, the snow-capped mountains are all piled up in the southwest, the music of hundreds of song birds are mingled with the call of the prairie chicken and the crowing of our own beautiful rooster from the top of the hay-stack being applauded by all his wives from down below. All the world seems at peace and certainly this hundred and sixty acre corner is.[36]

In another letter to her family three months later she reveals the beauty of the landscape and the natural abundance nature provides for her.

> The country is at its best now, just like a huge garden, with wild flowers everywhere, and acres upon acres of oats and wheat. The two acres in front of the house look like a huge lawn. The wind keeps it in continual motion like wavelets on a lake. We are already eating radishes and lettuce; the peas are in blossom and the beans are coming along fine. I know you won't like to farm Mother, but you couldn't fail to see the beauty in this lovely country with its terraces, valleys, hills and the pure white mountains for its background. From Halcourt Hill, looking west, you would forget to breathe, the scene holds you so spell-bound.[37]

One group of visitors to Alberta, representatives from across the country to a meeting of the National Council of Women meeting in Calgary in 1921, were taken on a prairie tour and upon their return wrote the following report:

> In the glow of the evening, the return was made to the city, but one motor car, containing a returned old timer, managed to lose itself conveniently out on the prairie where, in the midst of a wonderful sunset a breadth of prairie horizon and the delight of picking prairie flowers, the study of nature's art work satisfying and uplifting in preference to the four walls within the city. An Indian on horseback approaching his shack impelled by the desire to call, so tumbling out of the motor car with a request to enter his abode was solemnly granted. We enjoyed looking at his peculiar bed, the slanting top of which was beautifully embroidered. While regretting that his housekeeping was not quite according to Hoyle. Then out into the fresh air, smelling of wild sage and unknown flowers sending its glorious freshness far out in the prairie night.[38]

---

36 G. Moyles, Challenge of the Homestead: Peace River Letters of Clyde and Myrle Campbell, 1914-1924 (Historical Society of Alberta, Alberta 1988). Letter from M. Campbell, dated May 6th, 1921 from Elmworth Alberta to her Mother and Father in England.

37 Ibid M.Campbell, letter from Elmworth, Alberta to her family, dated July 1, 1921.

38 From "Gathered Sheaves" A report from the meeting of the National Counci of Women held in Calgary Alberta,1921.

Even women such as Moira O'Neill who were well aware of the limitations of the nature in this new land recognized the ability of the landscape to uplift the weariest settler. Her poem, "On the Prairie" captures her perception:

> Open and undeceiving is the bright unfriendly space
> You're miles from a spring of water and miles from another face.
> The prairie's not for shelter but it's plain to understand
> The winds are ever circling and the sunshine warms the land.
> The air is strong as oceans, this noon-light falls in showers
> On crop of shimmering grasses, on millions of yellow flowers.
> You've little cause for gladness, but your heart is up and glad...[39]

While some women were intent upon describing the beauty that surrounded them and their feelings toward their new home others chose to spend what little free time they had in the environment. Some of their correspondence captures the delight they often felt on such excursions.

> Our greatest joy was our annual camping trip to the mountains, to Waterton Lakes where old Kootenai Brown's shack was the only sign of habitation... We also camped in the Crowsnest Pass on the spot where the terrible Frank Slide took place... Another delightful camp was in the Livingstone Range a t Bull Park. We had a wonderful camp and the fishing in the river was the best we ever had anywhere. On breaking camp we came down to the North Fork where there was quite a large settlement of young English ranchers who played polo etc.[40]

In her letter dated August 21st, 1920, Myrtle Campbell describes four delightful days spent on the banks of the Wapiti River. The campsite was five hundred feet above the river. During the day they picked saskatoons and dewberries and in the evening they sat around the campfire singing songs. According to the letter, they named the camp "Juanita" They carved the name on birch bark and hung it on a nearby tree.[41] Unlike those who took recreational trips of a more expansionist nature described in chapter two,

---

39 M. O'Neill (Skrine), Collected Poems of Moira O'Neill, (William Blackwood and Sons Ltd. Edinburough, London, 1934), p.107.

40 Reminiscences of G. George, Alberta Provincial Archives, personal papers.

41 E. Moyles, Challenges of the Homestead: Peace River Letters of Clyde and Myrle Campbell 1914-1924 p.75.

camping trips for these women provided opportunities to learn more about the environment in which they lived.

Nature as Spiritual Healer

The beauty for some women was so overwhelming that often the landscape itself would transport the mind to a more spiritual plain. It was in this state that the mosquitoes were forgotten and the daily chores faded into the background. Varying natural landscapes stimulated similar feelings. The spirit of nature, and the exhilaration and joy felt on viewing the foothills is captured by Moira O'Neill:

> Perhaps among the mysterious effects of colour, blue on white had on the special property of making meditation -- for all throughout the short, sunny winter day there is a light sparkle and exhilaration in the air which acts on the spirits like a charm.[42]

The ability of nature to lift one's spirits is captured by other women such as Gertrude Balmer Watt. In her book, A Woman In the West describes her experience:

> I know of nothing in life more exalting than to drink in the breath of the prairie air in winter. The rosy light coming across the shimmering desert snow, the faint sound of the wind, and the sense of driving on and on -- you know not where, filled me with an intoxication of living that swept me off my feet.[43]

Numerous women remarked on the peacefulness and likened it to the spirit of God. "The whole world of nature seems to present a perfect picture of obedience and peaceful meditation."[44]

The connection with nature was an intimate and personal one for many

---

42 M.O'Neill, "A Lady's Life on a Ranche", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, p.7.
43 G.Balmer Watt p.29.
44 N.McClung, In Times Like These, p.8.

of the women surveyed. Their writing reflects a strong personal feeling and attachment to nature, a spiritual thread that somehow bound them to their environment. Annora Brown, a well-known Albertan writer and painter who was born in a log cabin just outside Red Deer describes her connection:

> As I worked to translate my feelings into paint, I realized that unless I could encompass some of the miracle, unless I could make my subject a part of the earth, I had failed. The failure would not be complete, however. There would be personal satisfaction from trying and increase I personal stature from harbouring the thought.
>
> It was this feeling of oneness - of Nature with Man and Man with Nature- that interested me. I could never be excited by painting flowers in a vase or making botanical drawings. These represented Man divorced from the earth.[45]

The natural environment provided an inexhaustible source of inspiration for these women. Nellie McClung captures this sentiment when she says "Paper roses are fine in the winter, but in the summer, if you use them, it looks as if you don't think much of the kind God's puttin up, and you think you can do better yourself."[46]

Another of the more interesting themes found in the personal writing of the period is that of nature as refuge. Sometimes it was a refuge from the encumbrances of life itself.

> But it is a glorious life and even if we don't make our fortunes we are getting a great deal of joy and fun out of living. We are able to do what we like, when we like and how we like, and not many of you poor people who live in cities can say that.[47]
>
> We were free here, but I was lonely. When I was too lonely I would go to the lake on our farm and watch the ducks and those little black things with white, the mud hens; herons too and gulls; I would watch what they were doing and feel I had company and

---

45 A.Brown, Sketches From Life (Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1981) p.160.
46 N.McClung, The Second Chance , (W. Briggs, Toronto, 1910) p.144.
47 M. Hopkins, Letters From A Lady Rancher, letter dated June, 1910 p.57.

then I could come back home.[48]

More specifically, living close to nature was seen as an alternative to living in an urban setting. Living close to nature mean't living a rural life. For these women, the rural life was the best life; it was the "good" life. Numerous women's organizations established during this period were founded on this belief. Being able to breathe fresh air, build a house, plant a garden, struggle with hardship and through all this somehow learn where you fit in the "big picture" of nature nurtured your soul and made you a better person, they concluded. Hilda Buckman Crook confirms such belief in her poem.

> Maybe there's wealth in the city
> But there's noise and worry too
> So I want to go back to my sweetheart
> Back to the country and you.
>
> (chorus)
> Hand in hand we'll wander
> Among the birds and flowers
> The Sun above, the sun we love
> Will shine on us for hours.
>
> I'm tired of the noise of the city
> I'm tired of the clang of the train
> I want to come back to my sweetheart
> Back to the country again.[49]

The wisdom in choosing rural over city life was endorsed by close attention and openness to nature's own wisdom:

> Where at first I had talked a good deal I soon kept silence. Out on the prairie there is no need for speech or polite amenities; there you come closest to life -- the natural, appealing sane life, where much that we prate of in town somehow just comes home to you unconsciously, and you sit back quietly drinking in a mighty wisdom.[50]

Nature provided a refuge not only from stress but from international

---

48 E.Silverman, The Last Best West, p.5.

49 H.Buckman Crook, The West in Poetry and Prose, (u.p. n.d. Red Deer Museum and Archives).

50 G.Balmer Watt, A Woman In The West, p.29.

uncertainty as well.

> We are happy out here and feel lucky to be away from all the worry of the nations. It's like being in a harbour and looking out on a vast ocean of strife as a spectator looks at a play.[51]

Women's relationship with nature and their attitudes toward nature derived from its beauty, from the association of God and nature, from the freedom the new environment offered, and from the sense of mission the writers had toward it. For some women these feelings fuelled a desire to protect the environment as best they could. Hilda Buckman (Crook)[52] exemplifies such women in both her background and activity .

Women as Protector of Nature

In many ways, Hilda Buckman (Crook) was a very typical British middle class woman of the period; however, she applied her ability as a writer to encourage others to think about nature in a different way. Her life is typical of many women who came to Canada from Britain during the settlement period. Her life, her background and her experiences with nature provide us with insights which help to expand our understanding of the connection such women had with the new environment.

Born July 14th, 1893 in England Hilda was the eighth child of Sydney Savory Buckman, a noted geologist, and Maud Margaret Holland. In her diary she describes the terraced lawns, the meadow, the pony, chickens and geese that were kept, and the room on the third floor which served as a museum studio

---

51 E. Moyles, Challenges of the Homestead: Peace River Letters of Clyde and Myrle Campbell , A letter dated August 21st, 1920 p.76.

52 A Portion of Hilda's story comes from an unpublished paper by S. Thurston entitled, "An Alternate View of Land in the Canadian West: 1890-1930," (Leisure and Recreation, University of Alberta, May 1988).

in their five hundred year old house in the English countryside. Hilda and her sister displayed rocks and treasures collected from the area around their home. She came by her later love for country life, with its flowers, birds, and fungi, as a result of those early childhood experiences. No doubt this love of nature was more than encouraged by her father's interest, as well as by her, mother's father Robert Holland, a well-known British botanist and artist.[53] The assistance Hilda received in pursuing nature activity reflected a long tradition of support for women's involvement in this field.[54]

When she arrived in Canada in 1914 with her brother George, Hilda was twenty-one years old and unmarried . They lived in Rocky Mountain House on a homestead with another brother. This arrangement lasted only six months after which Buckman worked as a domestic at a homestead in Suffield, Alberta. This was a difficult situation for her and it was there she learned about class distinction in this new land. In 1915 she moved to Saskatchewan and worked on several farms in the province until 1920 when she returned to England. She would not return to Canada until 1924. [55]

Buckman's second stay in Canada saw her through to the end of her life. During this period she was very industrious and worked at numerous jobs in order to support herself. She was employed on the land as a cook for a threshing crew, as a salesperson for Driscoll's General store in Rocky Mountain House, and as the town dressmaker. In 1928, she moved to High River to take care of four children whose mother had died in childbirth. According to her, Buckman found this period of her life the most rewarding. In the early 1930's,

---

53 It is interesting to note that a number of other women mention the influence their fathers had on nurturing their love of nature. For example, see Annora Brown, Cathering Barclay

54 R. Mabey, The Frampton Flora, (Century Publishing House, London, 1985).

55 Buckman's experiences were common for many women coming to Canada for the first time. S.Jackel, ed. A Flannel Shirt and Liberty British Emigrant Gentlewomen In the Canadian West 1880-1914; and A.J. Hammerton, Emigrant Women (Croom Helm Publisher, London, 1979).

Hilda bought her own homestead near Ricinus, Alberta.

Hilda's papers are filled with stories of fishing trips, camping excursions, and hikes in the forest. Often she chose to express her feelings about what she saw in the natural setting in poetic form. Her poetry, some of which was published, refers to the land and the landscape. The two unpublished manuscripts are full of beautiful drawings of wild mushrooms and wildflowers. One of her pieces of poetry entitled, "Mr. Sun" was published as a song.

Hilda eventually married and gave up travelling across the country.[56] As she grew older her health limited her mobility but her active mind and wealth of knowledge regarding nature allowed her to continue to be active in nature study. She set up a nature study group for children in her community and continued to work diligently in her garden. She continued to write until the end of her life and to speak out on numerous issues related to the preservation of nature.

All her life, Hilda Buckman Crook continued to raise peoples' awareness regarding nature. It was her belief that everyone must do his or her own part to enhance and encourage the preservation of the natural environment. In her book, The West in Poetry and Prose she tells of her concern for nature. The poem entitled "Careless", while not not a particularly sophisticated piece of writing, cannot be faulted for its preservatist sentiment.

> We pack a lunch today
> To have it in the trees,
> Where the children romp and play,
> In the sunshine and the breeze.
>
> We came to this lovely place
> To rest, and let the children play
> And now his foot is cut
> On a bottle thrown away.

---

[56] Her husband-to-be followed her around the west for almost twenty years before marrying Hilda. Hilda always felt there was far too much to see and do to get married.

Oh careless careless camper
Don't you care for flower or tree
That you use this lovely place,
For your bottles and debris.

If all this lovely country,
Means nothing much to you,
Why not stay at home
And not desecrate the view.[57]

Hilda Buckman Crook did not address preservation issues with only a broad brush. She, like many other women felt the very real pinch of lack of resources. Raising four children was not an easy task. She describes one Christmas during the thirties when there were few resources and Christmas trees were costly. As a substitute she built a treasure ship.

I built a ship for Christmas
As trees were hard to get
So I built a lovely treasure ship
And used it for my pet.[58]

"Making do" was certainly a concept Hilda knew intimately.

It is obvious that middle-class Buckman valued nature and wanted to protect it. At no time in her writing does one get the impression of the writer wanting anything from nature; rather, her interest was one which connected her deeply with what she observed and who she was as a person. Nature was there to learn about, not to control. It was there to observe and experience. Although holding somewhat of a romantic notion about nature, Hilda was also concerned about real issues such as forest fires:

S mall wee sparks wil blow and blow
A nd tiny flames will grow and grow,
V eiling trees in sooty smoke
E nveloping all in flaming cloak.

---

57 Red Deer Archives, Personal Papers of Hilda Buckman Crook, n.d.
58 H. Buckman Crook, Personal Papers Red Deer Archives, Alberta.

T rees beloved in ages past
H elpless stand in burning clasp.
E 're the flames in angry roar

F ind more trees and ever more,
O n and on at angry rate
R ushes this Devil incarnate!
E 'en at last the battle o'er,
S ooty and burnt our forest floor,
T all trees broken, burn't and dark,
S omeone careless - left a spark.[59]

The writing of Buckman Crook presents an interesting psychological framework for understanding nature. She appears to have been able to empathize with the forest, recognizing the destruction human beings can cause to the natural environment.

While Hilda was concerned about protecting the forests, others chose to work for the protection of birds and animals. For example, Elsie Cassels of Red Deer in an article in the *Red Deer Advocate* entitled "Our Familiar Birds" discusses the interrelationship of birds and the rest of the environment.

> It would be sad indeed if our song-birds here had to be destroyed for their offence as hundreds are in other parts of the world... They do such an immense amount of good by killing injurious insects on our lawns and gardens here that they deserve all the protection we can give them.[60]

Elsie chose to conclude her article with the findings from a survey done by the Detective Association of America. According to a member of this organization, few criminals were found who had been taught to love animals. In a study in British prisons it was found that out of two thousand convicts confined to prison only twelve had possessed a pet animal during childhood. In contrast another British study involving seven thousand children showed that children taught kindness to animals-taught the reality of the law of life, were never charged with a criminal offence in any court. According to Cassels, lessons of

---

59 H. Buckman Crook, Personal Papers Red Deer Archives, Alberta, n.d.
60 E. Cassels, Personal Papers Red Deer Archives, Alberta, n.d.

kindness taught during the early years remained in the unconscious throughout life.

The validity of such studies may now seem tenuous. However, it seems apparent that Elsie Cassel's purpose in referring to such studies was to encourage children to care for animals and to provide some understanding to parents concerning the role a pet may play in a home. No doubt she hoped that caring learned in the home for a pet could be transferred to wild animals as well.

Caring for animals was a common role for women during this period.[61] In fact, the 1916 Board of Directors for the Edmonton Humane Society was made up entirely women, all thirteen of them. The primary objective for that year was to provide water troughs for horses and dogs in the city and to insure the proper care of animals by owners.

Writing and painting inspired by nature around them, these women expressed their deep love and appreciation for the new land. Such depiction allowed backgrounds of gentility, oppression and restriction to fade, prompting expression of understanding and vitality of "belonging". From observer, chronicler, preserver and caretaker to homesteader and home-makers, these women were completely "at-home" in this new land.

> Some people wondered how I could leave such a beautiful home(England) and sheltered life for our little home. But the way I saw it, it was mine where as "home" was Dad's and Mother's.[62]

Not all women were able to write down their ideas and attitudes concerning nature. Some were more prone to taking action.

In many ways, women's ideas were similar to those of the expansionists.

---

61 Animal rights and feminism became linked in the late nineteenth century , perhaps reflecting a realization of women's own victimization. See, Lynda Birke, Women, Feminism, and Biology The Feminist Challenge (The Harvester Press Publishing Group, Great Britain, 1986), p.120.

62 H. Buckman Crook, Personal Reminiscences of her first years in Canada p.3.

Both were able to appreciate the beauty and the feelings of freedom and excitement that eminated out of that appreciation. However, there can be no question that for the expansionists the feelings of excitement and awe were tempered by their overriding utilitarian mind set. While the expansionists viewed nature as a resource, some women appear to have a more personal and psychological connection with it. This connection nurtured a pride, dignity and strength within these women. It also encouraged a desire to learn about and care for life around them. It provided a sense of well being that added to their growing sense of security about this new land as home. The next chapter examines the various ways in which women were actively involved in preserving and caring for nature.

Chapter 4

Women's Public Involvement with Nature and their Contribution to a Preservation Consciousness

In the 1980's, an eighty-four year old Red Deer woman stood in front of a group of commissioners at an environmental hearing regarding the development of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Her presentation was short and to the point: unless the government took immediate steps to protect the existing forests and wildlife, irreparable damage would be done to the natural environment.

In the past two decades, a significant change appears to have taken place in the minds of Canadians regarding the need for conserving and protecting the environment. According to recent public opinion polls, protecting the natural environment has become the number one social concern. Such concern is reflected in the number of environmental organizations operating across the country. Thousands of Canadians each year spend hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours working to protect the environment. From licking stamps, to writing letters, to attending meetings, to peaceful public marches, Canadians young and old are standing up in support of environmental protection. For most of them this is not a job but rather an activity they choose to do in their leisure time. It appears to be a new phenomena; however, historical records indicate that this is not the case.

This chapter presents examples of women's contributions and involvements in a selected number of nature, educational, and women's

organizations. which developed in the first half of this century in Alberta. These particular organizations have been selected for two reasons; because of the degree of involvement by women in these organizations and because of the preservationist emphasis of the organizations. By contrast, hunting and fishing organizations organized and operating during this same time have very few women involved at any level of their operation. The lack of involvement by women in these organizations may be a reflection of the societal norms and expectations of the paper , however this does not address the fact that thousands of women are involved in other nature organizations operating during this same period. The examples chosen are also significant given mandate of the organizations to educate not only the members of the organization but young people as well.

During the late 1800's and early 1900's, the prairie provinces witnessed a significant growth in the development of clubs and organizations.[1] Many of these were nature organizations or groups which dealt with nature in some manner. At the same time as clubs were growing, nature publications were increasing rapidly. While the emphasis of these clubs and journals may have been different from those today and their operation lower, they reflected a similar excitement and interest in the environment and signalled a change in attitude towards nature.

Membership in these organizations included many women and while a local newspaper reported that there were twenty-one women farming in 1921, membership records show that thousands of women of all ages were involved in organizations which addressed nature in one way or another in Alberta

---

1 For further elaboration on the development ofclubs see D. Wetherell and I. Kmet, Useful Pleasures:Shaping of Leisure in Alberta, 1996 - 1945; and V. Strong Boag's The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women 1893-1929, (National Museums of Canada, 1976), Chapters 1,2, 3.

alone. Executive lists of these same groups show there to be a high percentage of women holding executive positions in these clubs.[2]

In Alberta, most settlement activity occurred between 1890-1920. For most of this period, rural lifestyles were the norm. Rural life was primarily home-centred and work-oriented.[3] The unpredictable environment often dashed expectations and exaggerated isolation. The need for communication and social activity promoted the growth of a wide range of community based organizations.[4] A substantial number of these new groups were nature oriented with their aims and purposes reflecting their interest in a variety of related issues. There were also a number of organizations that while not being strictly nature organizations, included nature issues and study in their programming. It was during this time that women's participation in such organizations grew significantly. These first two decades saw formidable growth in the leisure field in programs and organizations related to nature. There appears to be a levelling off of interest during the late twenties and early thirties with the development of new and different organizations in the late thirties.

The late twenties through the thirties was a time of transition for women which, in turn, brought new challenges. Physical drought of the twenties and thirties, the exodus of settlers from farms, diminishing support for rural life, institutionalization of community groups, and increased access to consumer goods were significant factors affecting prairie women of the time. These events and changes resulted in a general devaluing of rural life and thus of nature.[5] The idea of conserving started to lose its appeal. Regardless of the growing

---

2 Alberta, Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports, (Alberta Natural History Society, 1910-1920).

3 D. Wetherell and I. Kmet, Useful Pleasures: and R. Rees, New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home. (Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, 1988).

4 V. Strong Boag, The Parliament of Women, 1976.

5 J. MacDougall, Rural Life in Canada (Westminster Company Ltd., Toronto, 1913).

disinterest, drought and other natural disasters forced women to hold on to well-worn conserving patterns in order to survive. This preservation mentality was particularly difficult to maintain at a time when good access to a variety of consumer goods was growing by leaps and bounds. Many farm families could not stem the consumer flow and found themselves deeply in debt.[6]

The fifties, with its brighter look to the future, again had a significant impact on women's outlook toward conserving and caring for the environment. More specifically, homemade articles and the idea of re-cycling and re-use so prevalent in the thirties and forties was thought of as "old fashioned." New was better and a consumer value system was operating in most prairie homes. The home based values from which conserving ideas were initially nurtured became eroded. As a result, home-based conservation took a downturn and outside activity became more recreational and less subsistence-based.

Old pieces of furniture and curtains were no longer appropriate and were dismantled or discarded. In their place were shiny new "machine made" sideboards and tables. The idea of "making do" which was at the base of most home activity was pushed aside and replaced by a value system which valued "newness" and "sameness". Electricity, plumbing, automobiles, televisions, radios, and telephones became easily accessible for most prairie families. It wasn't that "preserves" were not put up or the garden tended, it was just that there were more human concerns to think about, the neighbours of twenty years moving to the city and the children following close behind. On the home front no one seemed to care about nature or the environment!

The fact that women were under represented in public and political contexts for sixty years after the first meeting of the Commission on

---

6 G. Friesen, The Canadian Prairies (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1984).

Conservation in no way reflects women's lack of interest or commitment regarding the environment. On the contrary, women were actively involved in conservation and preservation activities on the prairies throughout all the social changes. Not always operating in the public limelight or political arena, their activities were both home and community-centred and sometimes regionally organized. Their names show up on petitions against development[7] and in support of adequate and clean water. In addition they worked diligently and were instrumental in developing community-based networks that would encourage awareness of nature. Some women organized new groups while others worked through existing structures, connecting nature study with other more home-based aspects of women's lives.[8] It was membership by these women in nature organizations that provided the opportunities to exchange recipes and gardening tips, learn about the medicinal properties of certain plants, and discuss specific issues related to their environment, as well as keep abreast of numerous international happenings regarding development.[9] Urban organizations such as Horticultural Associations, Vacant Lot Committees, and the organizers of urban playgrounds were intent upon bringing nature to the city as a remedy for some of the social ills which plagued urban life.[10] They were some of nature's greatest supporters, even when others were turning to the city and urban lifestyles.

The involvement by these women provided a basis for the growing national environmental movement of today. It was these women who kept a "mind set" alive based on re-cycling, re-using, and making do. While the

---

7 Canadian National Parks Association, List of Organizations Protesting Against the Spray Lakes Project, December 4, 1926, u.p.

8 Minutes of United Farm Womens' Association and Women's Institutes.

9 Many women's groups such as the Girl Guides and Women's Institutes had counterparts in other parts of the world.

10 J. MacDougall, Rural Life in Canada, 1913.

political and economic framework changed dramatically during this period, somehow the preservationist ideas were woven into regional western culture in a lasting way. An examination of women's involvement in a variety of public organizations will reveal the work and worth of such groups.

Women's Involvement in Nature Study

One of the first and perhaps most thoroughly documented nature organizations operating in Alberta during this time that was publicly committed to the preservation of the natural environment was the Alpine Club of Canada. Established in 1906 by Elizabeth Parker and W.O. Wheeler, the objects of the club were as follows:

(1) the promotion of scientific study and the exploration of Canadian alpine and glacial regions;

(2) the cultivation of Art in relation to mountain scenery;

(3) the education of Canadians to an appreciation of their mountain heritage;

(4) the encouragement of the mountain craft and the opening of new regions as a national playground;

(5) the preservation of the natural beauties of the mountain places and of the fauna and flora in their habitat;

(6) and the interchange of ideas with other Alpine organizations.[11]

According to the constitution, the club was established as a national trust for the defence of the mountain solitudes against the intrusion of steam and electricity and all the vandalisms of the luxurious, utilitarian age.[12] In Parkers

---

11 E.Parker, *Canadian Alpine Journal*, (Whyte Museum and Archives, Banff, 1907) p.5.
12 Ibid p.5.

own words, "it is the Club's business to support all measures towards preservation for all time of the fauna and flora in their wild habitat."[13] Membership in this nature preservation organization included well educated[14] middle-aged men and women from the United States, England, Scotland, Ireland and South Africa as well as members from almost every major centre across Canada. The membership listing for 1907 is shown in Table 1, found on page 67.

In 1907, one-third of all members of the organization were women; by 1917, over forty percent were women. It is interesting to note that of the three associate members, all three were Calgary women. In order to become an associate member one was required to pay a twenty-five dollar annual fee to assist the club's finances. This was a "hefty" fee to pay at the time. Local sections soon opened in Edmonton and Calgary as well as in other major urban centres across the country. Although not a large number of Albertan women participated in the club directly, women's groups across the province requested speakers from the club on a regular basis in order to keep abreast of the work of the organization and the issues it was dealing with.[15]

In 1923, the Alpine Club of Canada organized a second group to protect the national parks and known as the Canadian National Parks Association. The primary aim of this new group was to conserve the Canadian National Parks for scientific, recreational and scenic purposes, and to protect them from exploitation for commercial purposes.[16] From its inception, the organizers

---

13 Ibid p.6.
14 One third of the membership had attended private schools or military academy's and over 55% attended university , teachers' college or a post secondary technical school.
15 Minutes of Women's Institute meetings and church women's organzations document this fact.
16 L. Bella, Parks for Profit, p. 51.

Table 1

Membership in the Alpine Club of Canada, 1907

	Women (Alberta)	Members (Alberta)	Total
Honorary Member	1	0	7
Associate Member	3	3	10
Active Members	7	34	100

(Statistics taken from an article by E. Parker in the "Canadian Alpine Journal," written in 1907.)

realized that women's organizations across the country had a keen interest in nature issues and were willing to work to preserve nature settings.

Consequently, the executive included representatives from a number of women's groups such as the National Council of Women, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, and the Girl Guides of Canada. What is interesting is that there was only one representative from Alberta, A.B. Mackay, a lawyer from Calgary who was the Chairman, Western Division of the Canadian Automobile Association.

It would appear that Alberta women were not as interested in involving themselves with highly publicized nature activity during this time. Their interest was focussed on activities of a more local nature. Women's lack of high profile during this time reflects more the social mileau in which they lived than their ability and/or desire to be involved in issues related to the natural environment. For the most part, these women were not as intent on changing the social structure as they were in learning about their new surroundings.

About the same time that women in the mountains were beginning to involve themselves in nature activity, women in central Alberta were involved in nature organizations such as the Alberta Natural History Society (A.N.H.S.). The A.N.H.S., established in 1906 by a Blackfalds doctor, Henry George, was the successor to the former Territorial Natural History Society. The aims and purposes of the A.N.H.S. and its many branches were:

(a) to instruct farmers how to recognize beneficial and injurious insects, weeds and birds, and how to combat those that are injurious;

(b) to promote an interest in and the study of the economic and the scientific phases of the various branches of Natural History; and

(c) to establish one or more natural history museums at central points and

collections in connection with schools throughout the Territories.[17]

Like the Alpine Club of Canada, the A.N.H.S. actively pursued educational and preservationist activities. These three purposes as stated are utilitarian, aesthetic, and preservationist to varying degrees. While (a) is the most utilitarian of all three, both (b) and (c) are to some degree aesthetic. It is (c) that is perhaps the most preservationist. All three aims clearly support activities and events emphasizing education. From its very beginning, the organization was actively involved in protection and conservation issues.

The first organized group was established in Red Deer[18] and branches were soon operating in Stettler, Hillsdown, Ponoka, Edmonton, Erskine, Medicine Hat and Wetaskiwin. By 1910, there were fifty members and membership continued to increase into the early 1920's. An executive report dated 1921 noted the large increase of inquiries being received regarding a variety of nature topics.

> It has been the most notable feature of the year's work and is gratifying evidence of the keener interest which is being taken by the people of the province in their natural environment. This particularly true of rural districts-a large proportion of our correspondence having been with country points-country school teachers, members of the U.F.A. locals and other similarly situated areas realizing the pleasure and profit to be derived from knowledge of the life histories of our fauna and flora.[19]

In addition to the local interest shown by the public at large the provincial government showed its support by providing an operating grant of one hundred dollars to the group in (need date). Federal officials such as Arthur Meighen, Minister of the Interior, in a letter dated June 4th, 1920 solicited support from the A.N.H.S for the protection of birds . The club's executive supported the project

---

17 The Constitution and by-laws of the Alberta Natural History Society , Alberta Department of Agriculture appendix d. 1903., Red Deer Museum and Archives, Alberta.

18 There is some information suggesting that the first Alberta Natural History Club was organized in Lethbridge in 1888; however, there are no documents to support this.

19 Alberta Natural History Society, Executive Report, 1921. p.1.

and members of the Society were made Honorary Bird Watchers. In their official capacity they encouraged bird protection programs and activities across the province. In an executive report dated 1921 they were "pleased to note, especially amongst the young folk -- a more intelligent and kindly interest in 'Our Feathered Friends.'"[20] They went on to encourage the co-operation of sportsman in the protecting of game birds and wild fowl, during the breeding season.

The organization was established to operate in an egalitarian manner. Membership fees were one dollar per annum and all members were given equal opportunity to speak and vote. For example, the minute book for 1906 documents the names of four women on the list of directors as well as a mention of a presentation on birds by Miss Mina Cole. The involvement by women and their relationship to men active in the club appears to be highly egalitarian. Perhaps this has as much to do with the fact that the men who are involved while perhaps being highly respected in the community, do not support the dominant view of nature. To this end they themselves are not representative of the norm of the time.

While both men and women participated in establishing the new societies, minutes of meetings show that women's membership was often greater than that of men (see Table 2, page 71).

Further, the same minutes indicate that women were actively involved on numerous committees which, for example, organized educational essay contests for children, acquired new books on a variety of nature topics for local schools and libraries, promoted bird house building, sponsored preservation projects at local fairs, and spoke at schools on nature topics.

---

[20] Ibid.

Table 2

Women's Involvement in Alberta Natural History Society Meetings

Meeting	No. of Paid Members	Women	Men
October 19,1909	17	10	7
December 7, 1909	12	8	4
January 4, 1910	17	10	7
January 17, 1910	14	9	5
February 1, 1910	28	18	10

(Compiled from Minutes of meetings of the Alberta Naatural History Club Minute Book, Red Deer Museum and Archives, Red Deer, Alberta. From S. Thurston, An Alternate View of Land in the Canadian West: 1890-1930. u.p. Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Alberta, 1989.)

Table 3

Women's Involvement on the Executive of the

Alberta Natural History Society

Year	Women on Exec	Total on Exec	Positions Women Held
1910	4	12	Sec'y/3ExecComm
1912	8	16	Vice-Pres/7ExecComm
1914	8	16	HonTreas/HonSec/6ExecComm
1915	5	12	5Directors
1916	6	13	1st Vice-Pres/5Directors
1919	7	16	1st VP/Sec-Treas/5Directors
1921	5	16	VP/Sec-Tres/3Directors

(Compiled from Minutes of Annual Meetings of the Alberta Natural History Club, 1910-1921. From S. Thurston, An Alternate View of Land in the Canadian West: 1890-1930. u.p. Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Alberta, 1989.)

The Erskine Branch of the A.N.H.S. elected Mrs. Judd as president and Mrs Morton as secretary-treasurer for the year 1913-1914. Minutes of AnnualMeetings of the A.N.H.S. from 1910 to 1921 show that women were also prominent on the provincial executive (see Table 3, page 72).

The combination of aesthetic, preservationist , and educational focuses is best captured in the work of two members of the A.N.H.S. They were women whose passion for nature eventually influenced hundreds perhaps thousands in their communities.

Mina Cole, known as the "nature lady," was a public school teacher and a remarkable source of information about fauna and flora of central Alberta. She had a reputation for knowing the location of every chickadee's nest and could name all the wild flowers in the Red Deer area. One of the more charming aspects of her life was her pet porcupine named "Unk" who accompanied her on many nature walks around the area. Mina loved the out of doors and was willing to share her expertise and knowledge with anyone interested, young or old. Surprisingly, she was also one of the few women involved in the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Association established in 1928.

Mrs. Elsie Cassels (1865-1938), beloved "bird woman of Red Deer," was actively involved in the society until 1926. She moved from Scotland to the RedDeer district with her husband in 1889 and lived on a farm in the Springvale area near Sylvan Lake.[21] In 1922, Mrs. Cassels was first vice president of the A.N.H.S.; in 1923, she was secretary for the organization. Although a lover of all nature, her diary portrays a love for birds and wild flowers in particular. Other members of the society saw her as a source of inspiration, particularly to the junior members of the society. She regularly visited the

---

[21] Red Deer Advocate, from an article entitled "Mr. and Mrs. Cassels Lived Frugal Life, But Left Estate of $90, 000, " March 28th, 1967.

schools, church groups and community organizations around Red Deer to give talks on various nature topics. In addition, Elsie Cassels was often called upon to lecture at the monthly meetings of the society. Her talks on birds reflected a deep connection with nature and revealed her disdain for those who used nature for their own benefit. In a presentation entitled "Notes on Wild Fowl at Sylvan and Gaetz Lakes," she reprimands women who use nature to adorn themselves:

> The largest of the grebes is the Western or Swan Grebe, and to my thinking the handsomest and most graceful. This is the one I am sorry to say, which has been killed in such numbers for its beautiful silvery breast to adorn the persons of thoughtless women.[22]

In the same paper, Cassels' concern for nature and her keen support for the development of observation skills related to natural history is captured in her closing paragraphs:

> To those who might like to take up this most interesting study of land and water birds, to go alone, to proceed quietly, and to be prepared to stand absolutely still (freeze as we call it) when occasion requires. If they have any taste at all for such study I feel certain they will be amply repaid. Do not go with a crowd, for you may well spare yourself the trouble, you will see nothing but birds making themselves scarce. If you must have company, choose a friend who is as keen to observe as you are, and one who will keep quiet. My constant companion is a favourite dog, and he understands the business thoroughly.[23]

Unlike many members of the society, Mrs. Cassels was opposed to the collecting of specimens. Like most natural historians, field study was an important and significant activity in which members should participate. However, Elsie Cassels believed that sharpening one's observation skills, not claiming specimens, was instrumental to field study; most other members did

---

22 From the Personal Papers of Mrs. Elsie Cassels, A speech entitled "Notes on Wild Fowl at Sylvan and Gaetz Lakes, " Red Dear Museum and Archives, Alberta, n.d., p.3.
23 Ibid p.5.

not share the same reverence for the undisturbed natural environment. They believed that collection of any plant or animal was justified if it was to be shared with the community. This difference of opinion fueled many arguments between herself and Dr. George, the founder of the society, who believed collecting to be important work. George's position is understandable -- he was instrumental in establishing the first natural history museum in Alberta at Blackfalds.[24] Elsie Cassel's ability to commune with nature and her sense of stewardship was shared by many other women.

Women like Mina Cole and Elsie Cassels were not alone in their ability and desire to share their knowledge of nature. A list of topics presented by women at ANHS gatherings between 1909 and 1921 included: "Botany" by Miss Moody of Calgary; "Structures of the Earth" by Mrs. Tallman; "Botany" by Mrs. Root of Wetaskiwin; "Edible and Poisonous Plants of Alberta" by Miss Moody; "Wild Fruits" by Mrs. George; "Mushrooms" by Mrs. Powell; "Insects and Civilization" by Mrs. Pamely; and "Geology" by Mrs Gaetz of Red Deer.[25]

The work of the A.N.H.S. was more than a social outlet for its members. Much of the work in the early years can be described as preservationist. Program outlines, speakers from provincial and federal resource agencies, programs for young people and outdoor activities all emphasized some aspect of preservation. In addition, two of the largest projects undertaken by the A.N.H.S. were the establishment of a Natural History Museum in Blackfalds, Alberta in 1904 and the Red Deer Bird Sanctuary in 1922.

---

24 University of Alberta Archives, Federation of Alberta Naturalists Files, Letter dated 1971 to Dr. M.T. Myers.

25 Red Deer Museum and Archives, Alberta Natural History Society Files, "History of the Society," nd. List compiled from document.

Women's Involvement in Camping

While hundreds of women and young girls were learning about nature, birdwatching, building bird houses, taking field trips and mounting local specimens through programs sponsored by the Alberta Natural History Society, thousands were actively involved in camping and woodcraft programs sponsored by Brownies, Girl Guides and Rangers. Girl Guide and Canadian Girls In Training (CGIT) camps were organized in Alberta about 1910[26] and other organizations such as the Edmonton Catholic Women's League and the YWCA were operating camps by 1917. All camps were intent upon providing moral values through pleasurable experiences.[27] The Girl Guide organization is one example of the numerous camp-oriented organizations operating during the period (see Table 4, page 77.)

The primary aim of the Girl Guide movement was "education and development of character through individual enthusiasm."[28] Camping and nature study were integral parts of the program from its inception. The first Girl Guide companies began in the Cochrane area southwest of Calgary, Alberta in 1911 and Brownies followed soon afterward. Ranger and Cadet programs began in the late 20's. Most companies were initially church-sponsored by groups such as the Catholic Women's League, but in 1921 the movement became non-denominational. By 1929, a provincial organization had been set in place. The first groups relied on the Boy Scout Manual but added a homemaking component to it.[29] However a Girl Guides manual was available for use by 1918.

---

26 B.V. Cormack, Landmarks, (Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1967) p. 15, 35.
27 D. Wetherell and I. Kmet, Useful Pleasures, p.208, 209.
28 Ibid p.89.
29 This was homemaking with a difference and included scaling fish and plucking chickens.

Table 4

Girl Guides in Alberta, 1930 to 1940

Year	1930	1932	1936	1937	1939	1940
No. of Guiders			370			
No. of Guides		1840		2,359	2863	2730
No. of Campers	743	237	588	588	734	
No. of Brownies		849		1,398	2109	2408
No. of Rangers		90				186
No. of Guide Companies		78	13	120	150	
No. of Brownie Packs		33	9	86	113	
No. of Ranger Groups		7		23	28	
No. of Camps	29	9	18	30	29	

(Statistics from Girl Guides of Canada, Alberta Council Annual Reports, 1930-1940)

The Girl Guide movement expanded rapidly in Alberta in both rural and urban centres. Archival records show that Brownie packs were operating in Calgary in 1922[30] and by 1923 eight companies of Guides and nine packs of Brownies were operating in Calgary. A photo shows that by 1931 twenty-three leaders from the Calgary area were providing leadership.[31] Ranger companies were established in the late 1920's and by 1932 there were seven ranger companies operating throughout Alberta. One of the strengths of Girl Guides was the well trained volunteers which gave the necessary leadership to the organization. In 1937 the provincial executive announced the establishment of a correspondence course in camping leadership . One of the volunteers, Miss Beth Riddoch travelled 21,362 miles around the province between 1945-1948 to train leaders.[32] Sometimes thought of as an urban program, the organizers did their best to insure that young girls in rural areas had access to it. A 1935 resolution brought forward at the Annual Meeting provides some insight:

> Whereas guiding is rapidly spreading throughout the rural districts in the province and whereas if these new guiders are to receive the training necessary for success of Guiding in the province, some new means must be found for augmenting Provincial funds to bring training to them. Therefore we move that every division and District in the Province contribute five per cent of their yearly funds for this purpose."[33]

The Girl Guide movement was often assumed to be a rather conservative movement but many within the movement believed it offered girls a means of equalizing both social roles and power:

> If she is to be equally efficient with her brothers for work in the world a girl must be given equal chances with him, equal chances for picking up character and skill, discipline and bodily health, and

---

30 ----- I Promise: The History of the Girl Guides in Alberta p 76.
31 Ibid p. 86.
32 Ibid p. 53.
33 Girl Guides of Canada, Provincial Archives, Edmonton, Annual Report 1935.

equal chances for using these when she has got them.[34]

A letter dated November 28th, 1932, to Miss Riepert in Toronto from Jessie Church, provincial secretary in Calgary, addressed the issue of men's involvement in guiding. It is evident from both the content and the tone of the letter that those involved in Guides understood themselves to be strictly a women's movement, a situation they planned to continue.

According to the manual, the best way to learn the Guide laws was through the camp experiences. It was acknowledged that one of the greatest benefits acquired from camping was "learning to do without so many things which while we are in houses we think are necessary."[35] In addition, " It is only while in camp that one can really learn to study nature in the proper way not as you do it inside the school."[36]

Not only did camping provide a ready-made nature laboratory, it provided a means by which Guides could gain some appreciation of the intricacies and complexities of the world and its creator: "You realize for the first time the enormous work of God ... and as you live in the fresh pure air of God, you find that your own thoughts are clean and pure as the air around you." [37]

> We use, therefore, the study of Nature as a first step to the realization of the Creator. The dissection of a plant or bird, the observation of the habits of an animal or insect, or the study of the stars and planets all command the eager interests of the girl, and if properly applied reveals to her with absorbing force the miracle laws of nature: it gives her a sense of the beautiful; it gives her an uplifting instinct of reverence for the power of God -- it educates the soul."[38]

In addition to opportunities for spiritual growth and alternative living, camping provided opportunities to learn more about nature. Those in the Girl

---

34 Ibid p.164.
35 Ibid p. 64.
36 Ibid p. 65.
37 Ibid p. 66.
38 Ibid p.184.

Guide movement believed that girls learning about nature would insure that nature was protected:

> All around you, too are birds and animals and insects and the more you know of them the more you begin to like them and to take an interest in them, and once you take an interest in them you do not want to hurt them in any way. You would not rob a bird's nest, you would not bully an animal; you would not kill and insect -- once you realize what its life and habits are.[39]

In a section of the manual on Woodcraft, the benefits to the all of the senses is noted:

> Nature work in camp sharpens the senses and makes us more aware of the beauty of the world around us. We learn to recognize colour, and form; bird calls, the call of the bull-frog and the squeak of the cricket; the smell of newly-mown hay and the smell of the pine needles and wood smoke' the texture of leaves and stems and bark. Light, hearing smell and touch become more acute.[40]

Much of the work done by Brownies, Guides, Rangers and Cadets was completed to acquire proficiency badges. Special awards were used to encourage young women to learn about specific issues and learn new skills. One such award was the Bessborough Challenge Shield, sponsored by the Alberta Fish and Game Association and presented to the woman who had successfully completed nature work.

The need for protection of the environment was stressed in and integral to the program. The specific references to wildflowers were generalized to include all of nature. Camping activities were of interest not only to the Guides themselves but to the community at large. Often the local papers would include a description of camping experiences of local companies and packs.

On a lighter note, camping experiences often provided an opportunity for campers to test out their musical talents. Sung to the tune of Swanee River, one

---

39 Ibid p. 65

40 Girl Guides of Canada, Woodcraft Manual, Section 1, n.d. p. 6.

camper created this poignant campfire song. The song goes like this:

> Way down the road to Camp McKinnon, not so far away,
> There's where we camp and have a good time,
> There's where we love to stay.
> Oh! the nights are dark and dreary
> "Skeeters won't let one alone,
> Of scratching 'skeeter bites I'm weary,
> From my feet to my collar bone.[41]

Judging from such verses, the camping experience was not always rosy but camping was an immensely popular feature of the Guiding movement.

Reports indicate that both the number of camps and the number of young women involved continued to increase. By 1930 camping was well established in Alberta. By 1935 there was an increase of twenty-five per cent in the number of campers participating in provincial camps and a one hundred per cent increase in Guiders (leaders).

Camping was an activity which was instrumental in teaching young girls about nature and their place in it.

Nature Issues and Women's Organizations

By 1915, the United Farm Women of Alberta and the Women's Institutes[42] were two of the best known women's organizations in Alberta. The Women's Institutes attempted to remain non-partisan while the United Farm Women were forthright in their political affiliation with the United Farm Workers of Alberta. Both the UFWA and the WI were community based, provincial operations with increasing numbers of groups meeting on a regular basis in members' homes across the province. By 1915, the UFWA boasted twenty-three locals and over seven hundred members; in 1918 the WI had increased

---

41 Girl Guides of Canada,
42 History of Women's Institutes, 1915.

its membership to eight thousand women.[43] In addition, by 1923 the WI had organized thirty-six clubs for young girls across the province representing a membership of approximately six hundred .[44] While the UFWA required its members to be the wife or daughter of a farmer, the WI broadened its membership to include women in small towns and eventually cities. Both organizations worked closely with the provincial Department of Agriculture and received a yearly operating grant and program planning support from the department. Provincial government subsidies for both organizations continued until the early 1930's.

The WI was a socially oriented organization with strong educational and philanthropic emphasis. As early as 1909, demonstration trains, sponsored by the WI in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture, travelled throughout the province providing speakers and displays on a number of farm topics. In addition, annual conferences were held at local agricultural colleges, prizes for nature competitions were provided at local country fairs, and nature study programs were all part of the training and education provided. Through such programs, women were shown the merits and benefits of a rural life -- a lifestyle built on preserving, re-using, and stabilizing prairie society. Support for these ideals sometimes took strange forms. The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, Tenth Biennial Convention Report,[45] included a story of one WI convener from Alberta who gathered seeds of varieties of beautiful flowers in the park of an urban centre and distributed them to all the branch WIs in her area. One suspects there were a number of entrepreneurial spirits such as this woman providing leadership in Alberta during this period.

---

43 Ibid
44 Ibid
45 Canada, Department of Agriculture, Report of the 10th Biennial Convention of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, Toronto, November 1937, p.35.

In addition, travelling libraries were developed and loaned a variety of reading materials to local Institute members and friends. The free service included bulletins, pamphlets and books on various aspects of home, farm, and community life. Many of the publications were nature and farm-oriented, such as "Profitable Poultry Farming" (1905); "Breeding Feeding and General Management of Poultry, Part 1" (1906); and Turkeys, Their Care and Management" (1925). These pamphlets were most often written for a female audience given that it was primarily women who raised chickens, sold eggs and butter, and canned and preserved the garden produce.

During 1919, one hundred and thirty-nine short courses and five hundred and three demonstrations were presented through the WI's . Programs were surprisingly varied and included subjects of particular interest to rural women. Topics related specifically to conservation and preservation were included as part of the programs. In 1915, a list of topics included Woman's Place in the Development of Alberta; Birds, A National Asset; Lessons on Bird Protection; and the Use of Wild Flowers for Medicinal Purposes. Entertainment was deliberately used to attract members to meetings. Educational programs were most often blended with social activities.

The UFWA was also involved in educational programs similar to the WI; however, the organization was more politically focussed. With the exception of encouraging women to participate in programs such as the Shelterbelt program to beautify the home and its surroundings, the aims of the organization were very much in keeping with the United Farm Workers of Alberta. In relation to women and land, the UFWA pushed for equal access to homestead land as well as more equal distribution of resources and power in relation to homesteads. As stated in the description of the organization, "we visualize a new social order where the impossible contradictions and ghastly injustices of

the present shall have no place."[46]

While the aims of the UFWA did not address conservation and preservation issues directly, nor incorporate any alternative holistic view of nature which supported preservationist tendencies, the Club Women's Records for 1916 clearly show that the organization recognized the benefits provided by a nature-based lifestyle. In glowing terms, they claimed that rural life offered simplicity, joy, and restfulness. All of these attributes, according to the annual report, were a direct result of women living close to nature. The report goes on, " Who will accuse us of being too optimistic when we say that the rural life of Alberta may be made the best in the world."[47] Even a strongly utilitarian association such as the UFWA acknowledged the necessary and sensitive political relationship that could exist between women and the natural environment and the benefits derived from such a connection.

The years from 1916 to 1921 were difficult ones on the prairie. The war, the influenza epidemic and the drought in Southern Alberta brought suffering to many prairie settlers. Organizations such as the WI and the UFWA helped in the war effort by raising money to pay for medical services overseas. The drought conditions in Southern Alberta in 1919 required extraordinary support from WI's and the UFWA all across the province. A relief depot was established in Calgary and from this distribution point clothing, food, and furniture was distributed to settlers in need. In many cases, much of the clothing was handmade and the food home-preserved.

These two Women's rural organizations were significant in developing a preservation consciousness in that they actively valued and reinforced rural

---

46 History of the United Farm Women of Alberta, compiled by Mrs. R.W. Barritt, Dec. 1934.
47 Council of Women, Club Women's Records, Report of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1916, p.52.

lifestyles which were by necessity nature-based. The organizations provided numerous educational opportunities for women and girls to develop, understand, and appreciate nature. Ideas of conservation and preservation were tied closely to the home and were understood to be activities of nurture and care, requiring knowledge and skill. Conservation ultimately was more connected to a rural lifestyle and family than to resource development and economics. The basic premise of most nature education takeng place during this period was that nature was good and its study a necessity. The underlying message of most education presentations reinforced the benefits of remaining rural and living close to nature. By learning about nature, women would more easily be able to provide for themselves and their families. The WI and the UFWA were instrumental in facilitating the development of a preservation consciousness. Supporting the practical aspect of their courses and the political lobbying for equality was a desire to create stability, security, and sustainability. This aim of many families and individuals who arrived on the prairie with a wagon load of lumber and a handkerchief full of seeds stood in direct contrast to the expansionist dream which brought them there.

The flurry of nature activity during the first part of the century waned somewhat during the late twenties and early thirties. Records of organizations such as the ANHS show that the organization were limping along with many branches not operating at all.

By the middle 1930's the interest in nature rejuvenated. A host of new outdoor recreation organizations emerged.

Women's Involvement in Outdoor Recreation Programs

In addition to the Alberta Natural History Society, the Girl Guides and

the Women's Institutes and United Farm Women of Alberta, women made significant contributions to a number of outdoor recreation organizations during the first half of this century. Many of these organizations such as local hunt clubs, curling clubs, and skating groups, while taking advantage of the natural setting, were not aimed to any great extent at learning about nature, educating others about nature or preserving nature in any way. Membership lists show that for the most part these were male oriented groups and few women showed interest in such activity.

There were however, some organizations established with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for members to fully experience nature in the hope of developing an appreciation of nature. As with many of the organizations in which women were involved, these organizations were committed to educating young people about the physical, spiritual, and intellectual benefits of nature . Documentation of such organizations shows that women' participation is significant and in some cases women were responsible for establishing these organizations. The establishing of a Hostelling Association in Alberta in 1932 and the Skyline Hikers in 1933 are just two examples of new impetuses geared to nature education and preservation in which women were actively involved.

The Hostelling Association[48] was an idea spawned by two tenacious Calgary women and the hard work of a number of their friends. From frugal roots which included two borrowed cars, a horse, a rented tent and friends the organization grew into a multi-million dollar business. Mary Belle Barclay (1901) and her sister Elsie Catherine Barclay (1902) are credited for founding the organization with the help of their friends Ivy Devereauz, Dorothy Allen, and Hilda Phillidge. It was Mary Barclay who conceived of the idea one night in

---

48 Canadian Hostelling Association, Fifty Years of Canadian Hostelling (Detselig Enterprise Ltd., Calgary, 1988).

1933 while camping with friends at Wakesiah Lodge, then owned by Ida White and located at Bragg Creek. On July 1st, 1933 the first North American hostel was established; at the time, the organization was called the Canadian International Youth Movement Association - Hostel Committee.

Interest in the association grew rapidly. By 1937 there were twelve hostels functioning in the province, the majority situated in the foothills or mountains. In addition, the first publication, "Timber Trails" was being published on a regular basis. There was also, in the same year, a rolling hostel which travelled through the foothills carrying thirty-seven Americans.

By 1938, the not-for-profit organization stated its purpose to:

(a) help all persons (especially young people) to acquire knowledge and love of as well as care for the countryside and to promote better health, rest, and education;

(b) acquire by gift, purchase or otherwise and erect or maintain furnished or unfurnished houses, camps, or other suitable premises where sleeping accommodation washing and cooking facilities may be provided at nominal charge;

(c) procure special traveling facilities for its members;

(d) co-operate with other Y Hostels in other countries; and

(e) offer scholarships.

The Hostelling Association was primarily an educational organization. Much of its teaching emphasized care and protection of the environment.

While the Hostelling Association was geared primarily to youth, the Skyline Trail Hikers' association was developed more along the line of the Canadian Alpine Association, also an international organization with support from around the world.

While the Hostelling Association was geared primarily to youth, the Sky

Line Trail Hikers of the Canadian Rockies was an international club developed more along the line of the Canadian Alpine Association. According to the constitution, the spirit or aim of the organization was to nurture a reverence for the majesty and beauty of nature.

Participation by Albertans was relatively high with over half of the the twenty nine executive members residing in Alberta. Seven of the members on the first executive were women and two women, Mrs. Catherine Whyte of Banff, and Martha A. Houston of Lethbridge were specifically from Alberta.

The Sky Line Trail Hikers intended aim was to be reached by promoting an appreciation of the natural environment and the love of outdoor life through walking. Through club activities members were encouraged to learn and care for the alpine environment including "birds, wild animals, butterflies and alpine flowers." Members were also encouraged to care for the environment by maintaining and improving old trails and building new ones and by publishing materials about the trails for the benefit of potential members and those interested in learning about the alpine environment.

Further, the organization from the very beginning aimed at both conserving and preserving the natural environment by "...protecting the forests against fire; to assist in every way possible to insure the complete preservation of the National Parks of Canada for the use and enjoyment of the public and to cooperate with other organizations with similar aims."

Finally, members were encouraged to take a more political stand by lobbying those in power to develop "legislation to preserve to the public for all time rights of way on established trails and free access by trail to mountains, lakes, river, and forest."

Like many other outdoor recreation organizations, the Sky Line Trail Hikers, operated within a egalitarian framework with membership fees

remaining relatively low.

It appears that women were instrumental in initiating and maintaining a wide variety of nature organizations in Alberta during the first half of this century. They involved themselves in groups and organizations that allowed them to experience nature first hand including field study, hiking, mountaineering, and camping. In addition, they often were involved in educational activity including activities for young people. For the most part, these women were intent upon helping young people to experience the beauty and spiritual aspect of nature. Some of these women, particularly those involved in Natural history clubs, were more pragmatic regarding their involvement. They were intent upon having children learn specific names, species, and types of plants and birds. To this end they often sponsored contests that would reinforce such learning.

Chapter 5

Summary Observations

The intent of pursuing this research was to gain some insight into how women constructed their ideas about nature and conservation, and to determine how women's perceptions were similar to or different from the dominant attitudes of the time.

This study has examined the various views of nature and conservation prevalent in Alberta between 1880 and 1950. The expansionist viewpoint is conspicuous in both period documentation and more recent interpretations. In contrast, alternative points of view are best obtained through personal writings -- usually unpublished, annual reports, minutes, newspapers, journals, magazines, published histories of nature, outdoor recreation and women's organizations and interviews. This material was not selected for its literary or objective qualities but for the light it casts on the developing consciousness of nature and conservation during the period. The principle challenge of this search for alternative points of view about nature was that the search itself required alternative (unofficial, less conventional, personal) sources. Only by studying an extensive but random-thought set of individual points of view could a focus regarding an alternative picture emerge.

The years between 1880 and 1950 were the years in which Alberta women's ideas concerning nature were irreversibly altered. Women arriving in the Northwest, were faced with dramatic changes in their social, cultural, and

physical surroundings. Such change forced some and encouraged others to rethink their ideas of nature and their involvement with it.

Many women may have believed that building the "promised land" required controlling the natural environment. However, personal expectations, social roles and daily experience, coupled with a nurturing sensitivity toward nature, extended their attitude and perceptions well beyond the expansionist rhetoric that attracted them west. This random personal experience accumulated to create an alternative, primarily women's attitude about nature and conservation. Nature was not by any means, the universal or special concern of all women living in Alberta during the settlement period. Yet the contribution made by many of them forms a distinct counterpart to the popular expansionist beliefs of the period.

Put simply, the expansionist attitude was that nature was indeed beautiful and, in some cases, inspirational. However, while these aspects of nature were sometimes appreciated, it was its resource base that was most often valued. Nature provided unlimited resources waiting only for exploitation. Experience tempered this when it was discovered that scientific utilization was necessary for maximized gain. Conservation thus became understood as the proper management of natural resources: farmland, water, timber, minerals, waterfowl, game and certain scenery.

The dominant view of nature was, no doubt, shared by many women during this time. However, for a number of women, the more personal and psychological connection with nature was greater than the purely economic one. As this research suggests, many women found their new environment intolerable and left. Some of those who decided to stay and create homes simply survived. But for a few, this new homeland was so motivating they took the time to learn about it, write about it, speak about it, paint it, protect it. These

women were not interested merely in survival. Their excitement and commitment was enthusiastic and on occasion, obsessive.

To some, collecting and pressing flowers and composing sentimental poetry could be dismissed as genteel busy work. Writing articles for local newspapers, speaking to community groups and convincing farmers of the value of song-birds might also seem inconsequential. Hundreds of women participating in organized nature studies and thousands of girls camping and hiking might appear to be a curiosity. To others, Mrs. Gaetz creating a bird sanctuary, Mrs. Burns contributing to the Alpine Club, the Barclay sisters founding the Hostelling Association, Hilda Buckman Crook writing protest poems and Miss Riddoch travelling 21,362 miles to train Girl Guide leaders might represent eccentric tendencies. These and the many other examples have individually gone unnoticed; but collectively, the women of Alberta and their activities represent a remarkable ground swell of attention to nature and concern for conservation.

Even a preliminary study such as this begins to expose not only alternative views of nature, but the inevitable conclusion that rural women living in Alberta were the catalyst for the development of a more preservationist ethic.

What is this alternative ethic? In many ways this view was in keeping with the Romantic ideals of the 'back to nature' movement present at the turn of the twentieth century.[1] These women appear to be in awe of the beauty of nature. They understood nature to be good for both the body and the spirit. They took time to write of beautiful moonlit nights and the delight of wildflowers. They recounted stories of walks and rides out on the prairies. They described in

---

1 The "Back to nature" movement is most often thought of as a movement of urbanites. For further discussion see, George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of nature in Canada, 1893-1914 in *Journal of Canadian Studies* v.11, n.3, p.21.

tender terms the sense of freedom inspired by a spring wind. They eulogized the outlines of the mountains, and the colours of the sky. Nature was not wilderness or wild to them. As their new homeland changed and became more urbanized, they wrote more fervently about the goodness inherent in country life -- afraid, perhaps, of losing it. Despite the mosquitoes, the prairie fires, and the harsh weather, it remained in their minds a promised land, promising solace, beauty, nurture and joy. Nature was a constant companion and a spiritual friend.

This Romantic view, while a part of the alternative view of nature, was tempered by the hard reality of everyday events. These events made the women painfully aware of the limitations of nature. In response to such realities, these women often took time to learn about nature perhaps hoping to extend the bounty of nature somewhat. Their ideas concerning nature were integrated into their everyday existence. They taught their children about recognizing the limitations of nature and in turn taught them to preserve, re-use and recycle whenever possible.

The natural environment nurtured freedom for many women. They expressed their love and appreciation for the nature which surrounded them in a confounding variety of personal and collective ways. Gentility could be abandoned and restrictions allowed to fade. Expressions of vitality and belonging came forth. From observer, preserver, and caretaker to homemaker, organizer, and eventually activist, many women were "at home" in their new land.

Nature was not the exclusive concern of women during this period nor was there a singular "woman's view" of nature. In contrast to the expansionist view, women's interest in nature was not purely economic nor was it strictly utilitarian. It was not based solely on scientific use but on study, observation and

appreciation. There was a belief on the part of these women that nature was a resource with inherent rather than simply exploitative value. For most men and women living on the prairies during this period, the dichotomy between the expansionist and alternative views of nature was never as apparent as it seems here.

Works Cited

Alberta. Alberta Natural History Society, Executive Report, 1921, p. 1. Red Deer Museum and Archives, Alberta.

Alberta. Department of Agriculture. Annual Reports, Alberta Natural History Society, 1910-1920.

Alberta. Department of Agriculture. Constitution and ByLaws, Alberta Natural History Society, Appendix D, 1903. Red Deer Museum and Archives, Alberta.

Alberta. "History of the Society." Alberta Natural History Society Files. n.d. Red Deer Museum and Archives, Alberta.

------- *Alberta Naturalist.* Special issue on natural history. 1981, chapter 1.

Altmeyer, G. "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893 - 1914." *Journal of Canadian Studies.* v.11, n.3, p.21.

Barritt, Mrs. R.W. History of the United Farm Women of Alberta. December, 1934.

Bella, L. Parks for Profit. Harvest House Ltd., Montreal, 1987.

Bennett, J. "The Woman Behind the Magazine." *Nature Canada.* Fall, 1989.

Berman, M. The Re-enchantment of the World. Bantam Books, New York, 1984.

Birke, L. Women Feminism and Biology: The Feminist Challenge. Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., England, 1986.

Bleier, R. Science and Gender. Pergamon Press, New York, 1984.

Brown, A. Sketches from Life. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1981.

Brown, R.C. "A Doctrine of Usefulness: Natural Resources and National Policy in Canada, 1887-1914." Conference on the Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow. University of Calgary, Calgary, 1968.

Buckman Crook, H. The West in Poetry and Prose. Personal Papers. Red Deer Museum and Archives, Red Deer. u.p. n.d.

Canada. Commission of Conservation. "First Annual Report" The Mortimer Co. Ltd., Ottawa, 1910.

Canada Commission on Conservation, Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting Sessional Paper 52. p.79.

Canada. Department of Agriculture. "Breeding, Feeding and General Management of Poultry." Pt. 1,2. Bulletin No. 54, Ottawa, February, 1906.

Canada. Department of Agriculture. Report of the 10th Biennial Convention of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, Toronto, November 1937, p. 35.

Canada. Department of the Interior, Annual Report, 1900 pt. v, p. 3. House of Commons, Journals 1901, Appendix No. 1, p. 245-260.

Canada. Department of the Interior, Annual Report, 1902, p. xiv.

Canada. Dominion Experimental Farms. "Seasonable Hints." No. 17, July 1920.

Canada. Sessional Paper No. 52. Commission of Conservation: Report of the the First Annual Meeting. Ottawa, January 18th to 21st, 1910.

Canada. Sessional Paper No. 90. North American Conservation Conference. Declaration of Principles. 1909, p. 1.

Canadian Hostelling Association. Fifty Years of Canadian Hostelling. Detselig Enterprises Ltd., Calgary, 1988.

Canadian National Parks Association. List of Organizations Protesting the Spray Lakes Project. December 4, 1926.

Cassells, E. "Notes of Wild Fowl at Sylvan and Gaetz Lakes." n.d. p. 3. Personal Papers, Red Deer Museum and Archives, Alberta.

Cormack, B.V. Landmarks. Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1967, p. 15, 35.

Council of Women. Club Women's Records, Report of the United Farm Women of Alberta. 1916, p. 52.

Cran, M. D. A Woman in Canada. J. Milne, London, 1910.

Deny, E. Interview, October 1989, Edmonton.

Devall, B. and Sessons, G. Deep Ecology. Peregrine Smith, Salt Lake Cilty, 1985.

Dickie, F. "Digging Up Beauty" from Notebook #4, Folklore Project Material, University of Alberta Special Collections. u.p. n.d.

Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 2, 1884.

Eliot, E. M. My Canada. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1915.

------- Federation of Alberta Naturalist Files. Letter date 1971 to Dr. M.T. Myers. University of Alberta Archives.

Foster, J. Working For Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation In Canada. Toronto, 1978.

Friesen, G. The Canadian Prairies. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1984.

Gaetz, L. "Report of Six Years Experience of a Farmer in the Red Deer District." Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. 1890. p. 67.

Gale, H. and Hendee, J. "Conservation: An Upper Class Social Movement" in *Journal of Leisure Research.* v. 1, p. 246.

George, G. C. "Personal Papers and Letters." Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton.

------- Girl Guides of Canada. Alberta Council Annual Reports, 1930-1940. Girl Guides of Canada Provincial Archives, Edmonton.

------- Girl Guides of Canada. Woodcraft Manual. Section 1. n.d. p. 6.

Griffin, S. Women in Nature: The Roaring Inside. Harper and Row, San Fransisco, 1978.

Hammerton, A.J. Emigrant Women. Croom Helm Publisher, London, 1979.

Hastings, E. "Personal Papers , Diary and Letters." Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton.

Hazelwood, Mrs. "Personal Papers and Letters," Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton.

Higham, J. "Intellectual History and Its Neighbours." *Journal of the History of Ideas.* 15 June, 1954.

History of the United Farm Women, compiled by Mrs. R.W. Barritt, Dec. 1934

Holmes, Mrs. R. "Diary." Alberta Provincial Archives, Edmonton.

Hopkins, M. Letters From a Lady Rancher Glenbow Museum, Calgary, 1982.

Hopkins, Monica. Letters from a Lady Rancher.

------- I Promise. The History of the Girl Guides in Alberta. Girl Guides of Canada Provincial Archives, Edmonton.

Inderwick, C. "A Lady and Her Ranch." *Alberta Historical Review*, 15 n. 4, 1884.

Jackel, Susan ed. A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen In the Canadian West 1880-1914. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1982.

Kells, E. Elizabeth McDougall, Pioneer. United Church Publishing House, Toronto, 193- p. 42.

Kelly, J. Women, History and Theory. University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Kolodny, A. The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1984, p. xii.

Lane, A. "Mary Ritter Beard: Woman As Force." Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers. D. Spender, ed., Random House Inc. New York, 1983.

Lothian, W. A History of Canada's National Parks. Ottawa, 1976. V. 1,2.

Mabey, R. The Frampton Flora. Century Publishing House. London, 1985.

MacDougall, J. Rural Life in Canada. Westminster Company Ltd., Toronto, 1913.

MacLean, U. "The Honouable Irene Parlby" *Alberta Historical Review.* 1959.

Maini, J.S. and Carlisle,A. eds. "Conservation, Conservationists and the Canadian Scene." Conservation in Canada. Department of the Environment, Canadian Forestry Service, Ottawa, 1974, p.1.

Markham, S. The Development of Parks and Playgrounds in Selected Canadian Prairie Cities, 1880-1930. Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1988.

Mason, A. "William Pearce and the Spray Lakes Controversy." u.p. Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Alberta, 1984.

McClung, N. In Times Like These. D. Appleton, New York, 1915.

McClung, N. The Second Chance. W. Briggs, Toronto, 1910. p. 144.

McFarland, E. The Development of Public Recreation in Canada. Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 1970.

McKillop, A.B. "Historiography and Intellectual History," Cleo's Craft: A Primer of Historical Methods. T.A. Cowley. Copp, Clark and Pitman, Toronto, 1988.

Merchant, C. The Death of Nature: Women Ecology and the Scientific Revolution. Harper and Row Publishers, San Francisco, 1980.

Mitchell, E. In Western Canada Before the War: Impressions of Early Twentieth Century Prairie. John Murray Publishers, England, 1914.

Moyles, G. Challenge of the Homestead: Peace River Letters of Clyde and Myrle Campbell, 1914-1924. Historical Society of Alberta, Alberta. 1988.

National Council of Women. "Gathered Sheaves." A report from the meeting held in Calgary, Alberta, 1921.

Nelles, H. The Politics of Development. MacMillan Company of Canada, Toronto, 1974.

Nelson, J.G. and Scace, R.C. eds. Conference on the "Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomaorrow". University of Calgary, Calgary, 1968.

Novick, P. That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question of the American Historical Profession. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.

North American Conservation Conference, Declaration of Principles Sessional Paper no.90, 1909, p.1

O'Neill, M. "A Lady's Life on a Ranch." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.* CLXIII, January, 1898. p. 6.

Ortner, S. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" Women, Culture and Society: a Theoretical Overview. M. Zimbalist and L. Lamphere eds. Stanford University Press, California, 1974.

Owram, D. Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West. University of Toronto Press, Toronto,1980.

Parker, E. *Canadian Alpine Journal.* Whyte Museum and Archives, Banff, 1907, p. 5.

Parlby, I. *Alberta Historical Review.* 7(2), 1959, p. 2.

Puckette Nodwell, M. Diary, from Folklore Project, University of Alberta Sepcial Collections, 1903.

Rasmussen et al, A Harvest Yet To Reap. The Women's Press, Toronto, 1976.

Red Deer Advocate, from an article entitled "Mr. and Mrs. Cassels Lived Frugal Life, But Left Estate of $90,000." March 28th, 1967.

Red Deer Museum Archives, Alberta Natural History Society Files, "History of the Society", nd. List compiled from document.

Rees, R. New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, 1988.

Ruether, R. Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology. Beacon Press, Boston, 1983.

Salleh, A.K. "Deeper Than Deep Ecology" *Environmental Ethics* V.6, 1984,

Saxby, J. "West N'orWest." S. Jackel's A Flannel Shirt and Liberty . University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1982.

------- Searle Graingrowers News Sheet.

Silverman, E. The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier, 1880-1930. Eden Press, Montreal, 1984.

Strange, K. With The West In Her Eyes. George J. McLeod Ltd, Toronto. 1937. p.29-30.

Strong Boag, V. The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women, 1893-1929. National Museums of Canada, 1976.

Thurston, S. "An Alternate View of Land in the Canadian West: 1890-1930. Leisure and Recreation, University of Alberta, May 1988.

------- The Unexploited West compilation by E.J. Chambers, published under the direction of F.C.C. Lynch, Superintedent, Railway Lands Branch. Department of the Interior. 1914. p.181.

University of Alberta Archives, Federation of Alberta Naturalists Files, Letter dated 1971 to Dr. M.T. Myers.

Voisey, P. Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988. p. 77.

Watt, G. B. A Woman In the West. The News Publishing Company, Edmonton, 1907.

------- Town and Trail. The News Publishing Company, Edmonton, 1908.

Wetherell, D. and Kmet, I. Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta, 1896-1945. Canadian Plains Research Centre, Saskatchewan, 1990.